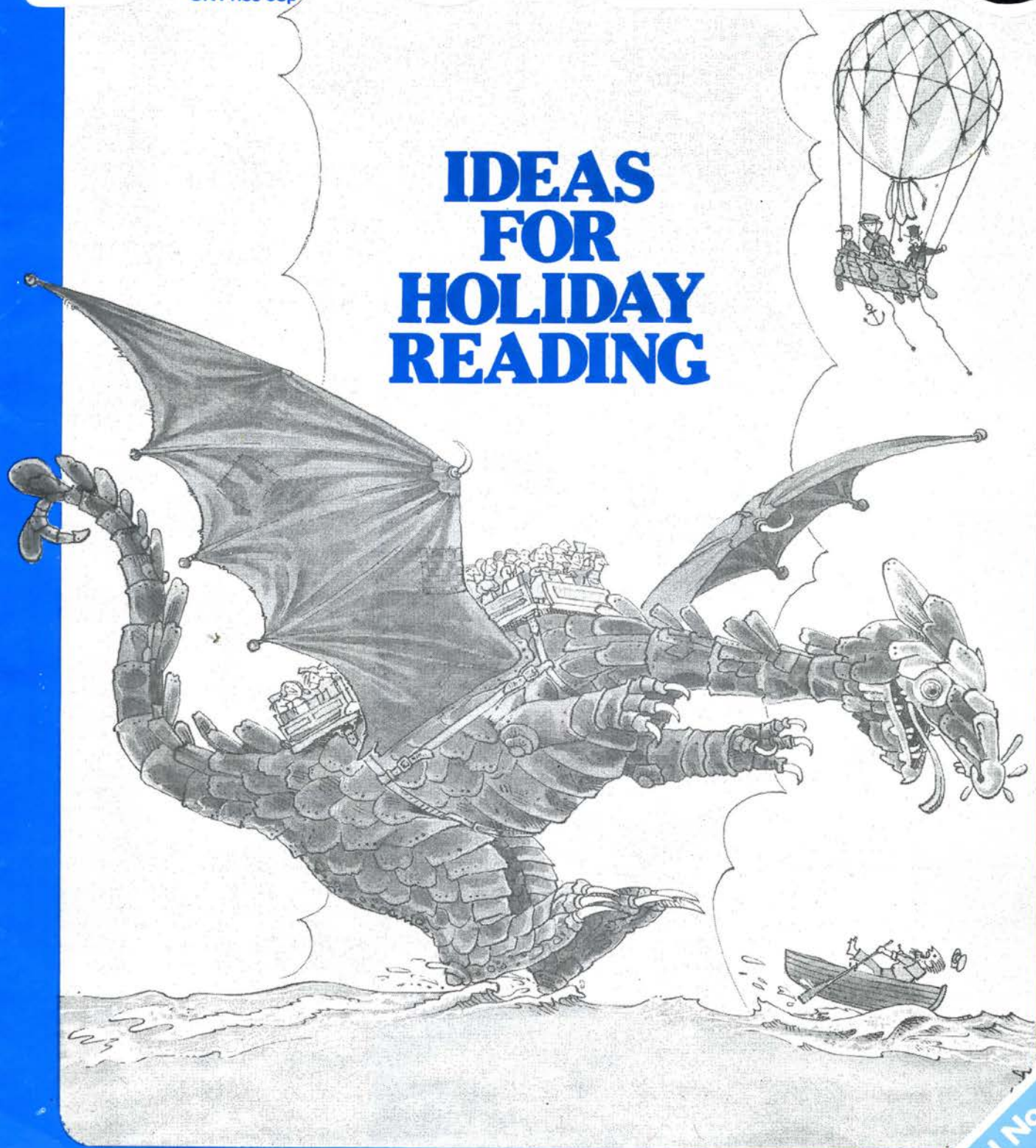


BOOKS FOR KEEPS

JULY 1980
UK Price 65p

IDEAS FOR HOLIDAY READING



ELAINE MOSS chooses TEN FOR THE TOP
ORGANISING AN AUTHOR VISIT

AUTHORGRAPH No.3
**Malcolm
Saville**

Contents

BOOKS FOR KEEPS

- the magazine of the
School Bookshop Association

July 1980 No. 3

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

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© School Bookshop Association 1980
No. 3 4th July 1980

Registered office:
National Book League, Book House,
45 East Hill, Wandsworth, London SW18.

Published by the School Bookshop
Association with the help of
Lloyds Bank, six times a year.



Looking ahead

In September the emphasis is on multi-ethnic books — why they are important, what to choose, how to get them. Plus Harry Secombe's personal choice, How to . . . Organise a Christmas Book Fair, news, reviews and more features.

November is our pre-Christmas special. Fun and surprises for everyone.

Editor's Page
News and comment from the editor 3

Carry on Reading Aloud
Elaine Moss picks 'Ten for the Top' 4

Reviews
Paperbacks
Nursery/Infant
Lower Junior
Junior/Middle
Older Readers
New Hardbacks 6

A Writer in School
Steve Bowles reviews William Mayne's
Salt River Times 9

How to . . .
Organise an author visit 10

Puppets and Pictures
Peter Firmin tells how TV puppets
turned into books 12

Authorgraph No. 3
Malcolm Saville 14

Talking Point
Why sponsorship? Lloyds Bank explains 17

**You Can Take A Book
Anywhere**
Books for the holidays — special review 18

News 22

Top 20 22

**Eleanor Farjeon and Mother
Goose**
A closer look at two awards 24

Sound and Vision
News and Views about books on radio,
TV and in films 25

Keeping Children Happy
David Green suggests ideas for school
trips and family holidays 26

The SBA Page 28

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

Annual subscription for six issues:
£3.90 UK, £6.50 overseas.
Single copies direct from the SBA:
65p UK, £1.10 overseas.

Cover illustration from E. Nesbit's *The Last
of the Dragons*, pictures by Peter Firmin.
Published by Macdonald and Jane's.

All photographs, unless otherwise credited,
by Richard Mewton.

Reviewers

in this issue (Reviews pages 6 to 8)



Jill Bennett

Jill has a class of 4 to 7-year-olds in outer
London. She is Literary Editor of *Child
Education* and on the Board of the SBA.



Steve Bowles

Steve is a secondary teacher and was co-
producer of *Reviewsheet* (reviews for
teachers) until it ceased publication.

Pat Triggs

Teaches in the Department of Education,
Bristol Polytechnic. Past Chairman of the
Federation of Children's Book Groups and
on the Board of the SBA.



Holiday Review Special

This feature was compiled by Pat
Triggs in consultation with various
experts in specialised areas (eg. fishing,
photography, natural history, outdoor
activities, P.E., etc.). Books included
are a mixture of hardback and
paperback, those recently published
and some which have been in print for
some time. We have made every effort
to ensure that information is correct
and that all books are currently
available.

The order form

We couldn't bear to think of you cutting up
your copy of *Books for Keeps* so we have
inserted a loose-leaf order form for
subscriptions and our various services and
publications (see back page). If you don't
use the order form yourself, why not pass
it on to someone else?

EDITOR'S PAGE

'Have you seen it?' 'What do you think?' 'I couldn't believe it.' 'It's a farce.'

No, not comments about **Books for Keeps** (at least not that we've heard!); but the opening remarks of lots of conversations since 24th April and the announcement of the winner of the £7,500 National Book Award (Children's Literature section). We had the information in advance for the May issue and Colin Dann's **The Animals of Farthing Wood** seemed rather an odd winner — in fact the entire short list was strangely assorted; but it seemed only fair to delay comment until we had read the report of the judge, Sir John Betjeman.

Well, we've read it. So have others — hence the opening remarks. Sir John is a good poet but apparently ill-equipped to evaluate children's books. Casting around for criteria, he has hit on 'the binding and spine' as important features. Alan Garner's **Stone Book Quartet** clearly didn't win because it was a boxed paperback set! **Farthing Wood** did because 'it looks like a book — even when the dust wrapper is off'. It also 'has a happy ending'. The intention may not have been to be patronising, but that is the effect. The Arts Council has given 'the kiddies' a pat on the head, one of them has got a big lollipop and now they should go away and play.

Anyway, are huge awards what is needed? (Or for that matter expensive adjudications — Sir John Betjeman received £2,000.) Last year a meeting of all sorts of people who have to do with children and books was asked how the Arts Council could best help. There was a remarkable degree of agreement and lots of practical suggestions. Awards came well down on the list — even from authors. So why another award? At the SBA we could do a lot with £7,500 (that's just in case the Arts Council is still wondering what to do with the refused History section prize).

Something else to think about — Holidays

We had holidays in mind for Authorgraph No. 3 (page 14). Malcolm Saville's books (fiction and non-fiction) are good holiday companions. When we visited him in Winchelsea he took us on a guided tour of that lovely old hill-top town. Full of enthusiasm he recounted its history; he made us see the sea filling the plain between Winchelsea and Rye and the ferry waiting. He told us why one part of the wall was called King's Leap. 'Of course,' he said at the end, 'I don't



Richard Mewton
photographing Malcolm Saville.

believe a word of it.' No matter, for us he had brought the past to life. As we left he was off to the post with a bundle of letters — replies to children who had written about his books. Earlier in the day he had said he thought Enid Blyton was responsible for turning more children on to books than anyone. It occurred to us that Malcolm Saville could take some credit for that too.

Cover story

Peter Firmin's dragon skimming the waves with all those smiling holiday-makers aboard really sets the mood for this issue. It's from **The Last of the Dragons**, and we're only sorry we couldn't afford to reproduce it in full colour. Peter Firmin's detailed, quirky illustrations are just the right complement to E. Nesbit's story in this picture book version. Also out this month, in **Picture Lions**, are two **Noggin** stories (**Noggin and the Flowers** and **Noggin and the Island**). If you haven't met Oliver Postgate and Peter Firmin's saga of **Noggin the Nog**, you've a treat in store. Peter Firmin did new illustrations for these; we so loved his inventive illuminated capitals that we persuaded him to do some especially for us for **Puppets and Pictures** (page 12).

Thinking ahead to Autumn

I don't want to take the shine from summer holidays still to come; but in eight weeks or so the autumn term will be with us. If you are thinking of having a book event, better start planning now. (Don't forget Children's Book Week is 4th–11th October.) If you can't get to London for **Children's Books of the Year** (see News, page 22), why not hire it from the NBL and do it yourself? Book soon, though — it's in great demand. This issue's How to... (page 10) tells you how to plan an author visit. Lots of authors are keen to meet their readers, but terrified at the prospect — I've been with some who were literally shaking. Bernard Ashley is not in this group. The last

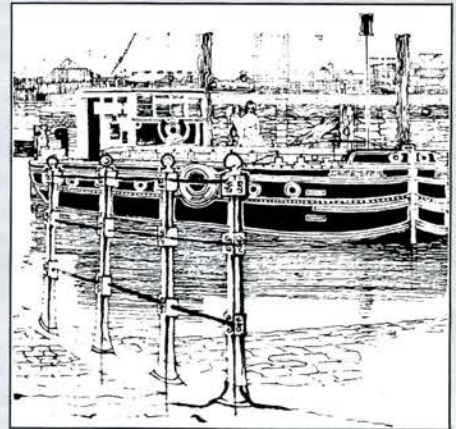


Pat Triggs
Editor

time I saw him 'performing' he was cheerfully autographing books, hands, arms, bits of paper and chatting easily with children — but then he is also head of a junior school. In general with authors — handle with care.

Break in the Sun

Bernard Ashley's latest book **Break in the Sun** is just out (OUP, 0 19 271434 1, £3.95). I think it's his best yet. Patsy, in trouble for bed-wetting, runs away with a bargeload of amateur actors.



The barge, Dame Sybil — Patsy's escape route to Margate? Illustration by Charles Keeping from **Break in the Sun**.

She finds herself playing a part in more ways than one trying to stop her new friends discovering that the police are looking for her. Also looking is Eddie Green, her stepfather (the major cause of her flight) and a reluctant Kenny. Kenny is a fat boy, a misfit and a marvellous creation; the relationship which develops between him and Eddie is one of the best things in a very good book. (Charles Keeping's double-page drawings of Thames-side scenes are an extra pleasure.) Due in Puffin in December, it's already being filmed as a BBC TV serial.

Here's hoping for a break in the sun for everyone. ●

Pat

CARRY ON READING ALOUD

With a special look at Top Juniors
Elaine Moss chooses

TEN FOR THE TOP

Reading is, and indeed to a large extent should be, a private and personal joy. But it can also be, should also be, a shared experience — the shared experience of reading aloud. Reading aloud is an accepted, expected activity with young children. But what about the older ones?

Sometimes teachers say that top juniors are too old to be read to; (but thousands, including me, love *A Book at Bedtime*, so why should ten-year-olds have outgrown the pleasure of listening?) Sometimes they say 'We *do* read aloud for the last half hour of the day,' (when everyone is exhausted, particularly the teacher!). Sometimes, with a sigh, 'There really isn't anything one *can* read to a mixed ability class of ten-year-old boys and girls.'

I take these comments to mean 'We don't really know what to read to top juniors.' But sometimes they imply, I fear, 'Our Head thinks that reading to ten-year-olds who ought to be able to read to themselves is a waste of time,' or, worse still, 'The Head thinks fiction isn't educational.'

There is not the space here to explore these two misguided 'educational' themes. But there is a chance to point out ten books that have been incredibly stimulating in a top junior classroom.

It goes without saying — but nevertheless perhaps it should be stated — that no book will succeed with any group of children unless the teacher reading it aloud is enjoying it too. So — yes — you have to read to yourself the book you are going to read aloud. The blurb plus a quick riff through to see if there are any pictures just won't do. You *could* strike lucky with this hit-and-miss method; more likely, much more likely, you'll come unstuck and present the anti-fiction-aloud lobby with another round of ammunition.

So, these are books that worked for teachers who read them aloud in a school where reading aloud, and reading silently, are valued activities. I had better make it clear that our children do not follow the text; they 'merely' listen, are involved, enjoy — and beg for more.

In any class tastes will differ as widely as reading ages. That is why the books that follow are a great mix of adventure, humour, SF, fantasy, family life, animal stories. Will the SF addict listen to Philippa Pearce's *The Battle of Bubble and Squeak*? Will the child who likes family stories be bored with John Christopher's novel-of-the-future *The Guardians*? It seems that shared experience of books that are exceptionally well written outweighs the natural preference of the individual listener, broadens his or her reading base and induces a not inconsiderable virtue — tolerance of other people's obsessions. (I rather think that the same positive group experience would *not* come about if pulp literature, which has its own place in private reading, were to be read aloud to a class; I don't *know* because to read aloud stilted dialogue and poor language would be a waste of the teacher's dramatic talents and, more important, the children's time — an experiment one could in no circumstances underwrite.)

On the whole, too, the best stories transcend classification. Does it matter whether Philippa Pearce's *The Battle of Bubble and Squeak* is a family story or is it a story about animals? Bubble and Squeak are a couple of gerbils and it is their fate (they oh-so-nearly get thrown with the rubbish into the steel maws of the dustcart) that brings the lives of the family that owns them into open crisis — and towards a broad solution of its problems. As always with Philippa

Pearce rose-coloured spectacles are firmly rejected: there are streaks of malevolence, evil she would call it, in most of us. Here it is the mother of the family who cannot stand those 'smelly little rats' — and who tries, yes *tries*, to get rid of them. But who would dispute that there *are* mothers in the world more neurotic, crueller, than Alice Sparrow? Children recognize this, listen with fascinated horror, enjoy discussing the relationships of Alice, her second husband, the kids and the gerbils — and are relieved when, by a subtle twist in the story, Alice feels needed by one of the gerbils who has been savaged by a cat, and begins to love it.

Real rats appear in *Mrs Frisby and the Rats of NIMH* by Robert C. O'Brien — or are these fantasy rats? Real rats don't succeed in running rings round the scientists who use them for laboratory experiments (*so far as we know*). But these rats not only defeat the scientists' security systems; once free, they make last minute rescue plans to evacuate a female mouse and her ailing son to safety, for their home is threatened by the plough. Animal story, gripping adventure, family story, fantasy: it's all of these.

Grinny by Nicholas Fisk had an uncanny impact (it's an uncanny book, after all) not only on the top juniors who could not wait for the story to unfold, but farther afield too. It is SF of a kind — but because *Grinny* (a robot posing as a distant great aunt) gets right inside the everyday life of a here-and-now family when she comes to stay, the idea grips the imagination and spreads like wildfire. The school bookshop was besieged with requests for *Grinny* not only from the class to whom it was being read and the class below (understandably) — but also from kids who had gone on to the local comprehensive and came back on Bookshop day further to deplete my vanishing stock.

MEET ELAINE MOSS

Throughout the seventies Elaine Moss has provided an indispensable service to everyone concerned with children and books in her selection of Children's Books of the Year for the National Book League. Each year she has chosen approximately 300 books for the exhibition and compiled a catalogue with comments and annotations which, while setting uncompromisingly high standards, has never lost sight of the fact that the books are for children.

She is a fierce (if that is a word one can use about someone as gentle and thoughtful as Elaine Moss) advocate of reading for pleasure, and a supporter of school bookshops which she sees as an important way to reach out and invite many more people into the world of books.

For the last four years she has been employed by the ILEA as a part-time librarian in Fleet Primary School (the only fully-qualified librarian working in a primary school) and this article is written as a result of her experience there.

In 1977 she won the Eleanor Farjeon Award and is much in demand to talk and write about children and books. This year she retires from CBY (after ten years she thinks it's time for a new picker) but will be compiling the Good Book Guide's new *Young Readers Booklist*.

See page 23 for details of Children's Books of the Year 1979.

The only book that has rivalled **Grinny** as a seller is Mike Rosen's **Mind Your Own Business**, those off-beat verses about 'the shirt/that's been covered in dirt/for years and years and years', and the contemplation of 'the hand/that touched the frost/that froze my tongue/and made it numb'. Once, on a school trip by Underground across London, astonished passengers were treated to a Rosen-in-unison programme. That was a peaceful journey thanks to a poet — no mucking about, no bullying.

Bullying goes on in every school, and most kids, like Mouse Fawley in Betsy Byars's immortal **The Eighteenth Emergency**, are scared of one or two of the bigger ones. Mouse is a naturally cautious boy and has prepared himself, in his lively imagination and with the aid of his resourceful friend, for seventeen horrendous happenings (e.g. Emergency Sixteen: Sudden Appearance in Your Swimming Area of Sharks). It is, of course, the eighteenth, unexpected, emergency — a confrontation with the school bully — that happens. 'If it was natural to start screaming, survival called for keeping perfectly quiet. If it was natural to run, the best thing to do was stand still. Whatever was hardest, that was what you had to do to survive.' A richly humorous book on social survival, **The Eighteenth Emergency** has never been known to fail. Every listener is right in there with the unfortunate Mouse, rooting for him.

Survival in the physical sense, when the odds are heavily against you is quite another matter — not funny at all but absorbing in an altogether different way. Scott O'Dell's **Island of the Blue Dolphins** tells fictionally the true story of an American Indian girl, Karana, who was left entirely alone on an island off the coast of California when the rest of her tribe (in the mid-nineteenth century) was murdered or deported by white traders. With only a wild dog for company Karana wins through. But was it winning through to have to go amongst people again? Is the ending really a happy one? In the long canon of Crusoeades this, so far as I can recall, is the only one with a heroine.

If you don't already know Gene Kemp's **The Turbulent Term of Tyke Tiler** it will not be obvious to you why I have thought it should follow on here — and I'm not going to spoil a treat by telling you. But I will warn you that it has an astonishing twist in the tip of its tail that throws ten-year-olds of both sexes into clamorous uproar. One teacher I know failed to take the precaution of reading the book to himself before he read it aloud — so he was knocked off balance by the climax along with his pupils. So beware. Prepare yourself both for the issues it raises (about special education, about children who don't understand teacherly language, about loyalty) and for chauvinistic reactions.

I would have thought Katherine Paterson's **Bridge to Terabithia** rather too personal a book to be shared by a whole class but this did not prove to be the case. The teacher who read it was herself carried away by the author's skilful handling not only of the competitive animosity between a boy used to winning everything and a newcomer to the school, a girl, who challenges him — but of their developing friendship through the creation of a fantasy kingdom, Terabithia. This leads to the accidental death by drowning of the girl, and to the boy having to face up to living through the awfulness, both immediate and long-term. The class who listened to this story had, earlier in its history, had to cope with a classmate suffering from leukaemia and with her death, so the book, perhaps eighteen months later, proved cathartic. (Had it been read earlier as direct bibliotherapy I think it would have been disastrous — but, like reading indifferent fiction aloud, this was an experiment to be rejected.) When Falkner's **Moonfleet** was subsequently read aloud, after a gap of perhaps two terms, the children were ecstatic — the excitement of a great adventure story carried by such noble language (read beautifully by the same gifted teacher) engulfed them. But when Elzevir died there were some in the class who thought this terrible ('stories should have happy endings'), others remembered **Bridge to Terabithia** and wanted to talk about and compare the two sets of circumstances.



Elaine Moss

If **Moonfleet** and **Bridge to Terabithia** may be allowed to count as one, that leaves me two more candidates for the top.

John Christopher's **The Guardians** is an unnerving comparison of life inside the crowded, over-regulated Conurb of the future with life outside the barbed wire, in the deceptively peaceful County — where individualism is surgically 'nipped out'. As 1984 approaches the issues raised in this novel need to be thought about.

And my tenth for the top: Nina Bawden's **Rebel on a Rock** which invites the reader in with the best opening sentence of the decade: 'When I was twelve years old I stopped a war.' It is about a family (mother, stepfather, two children and adopted Alice and James who are black — 'what a funny mixed lot,' says Jo, the twelve-year-old who stopped the war). The background to this exciting story is Ithaca where Jo, adolescent, awkward, fiery, mercurial becomes involved far more deeply than she means to in the insurgents' plans. Some holiday: but a fantastic read!

These books, read aloud at odd times throughout each day by teachers who relished them, offered a unique opportunity for bringing together in common pursuit of a story, ten-year-olds whose reading levels are as far apart as **The Cat in the Hat** is from **Watership Down**. ●

Details of books mentioned

The Battle of Bubble and Squeak

Philippa Pearce, Deutsch,
0 233 96986 1, £2.95
Puffin, 0 14 03.1183 1, 65p

The Guardians

John Christopher, Hamish
Hamilton, 0 241 01795 5,
£3.50
Puffin, 0 14 03.0579 3, 75p

Mrs Frisby and the Rats of NIMH

Robert C. O'Brien, Gollancz,
0 575 01552 7, £2.95
Puffin, 0 14 03.0725 7, 75p

Grinny

Nicholas Fisk, Heinemann,
0 434 93856 4, £2.10
Puffin, 0 14 03.0745 1, 50p

Mind Your Own Business

Michael Rosen, Deutsch,
0 233 96468 1, £2.75
Fontana Lions, 0 00 670959 1,
75p

The Eighteenth Emergency

Betsy Byars, Bodley Head,
0 370 10924 4, £2.75
Puffin, 0 14 03.0863 6, 65p

Island of the Blue Dolphins

Scott O'Dell, Kestrel,
0 7226 5248 8, £2.75
Puffin, 0 14 03.0268 9, 65p

The Turbulent Term of Tyke Tiler

Gene Kemp, Faber,
0 571 10966 7, £3.95
Puffin, 0 14 03.1135 1, 65p

Bridge to Terabithia

Katherine Paterson, Gollancz,
0 575 02550 6, £3.75
Puffin (later this year),
0 14 03.1260 9

Moonfleet

J. Meade Falkner, Edward
Arnold, 0 7131 5132 3, £2.95
Puffin, 0 14 03.0168 2, 75p

Rebel on a Rock

Nina Bawden, Puffin,
0 14 03.1123 8, 75p
Gollancz, 0 575 02695 2, £3.95

reviews

PAPERBACKS

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

NURSERY/INFANT



Lotta's Bike
Astrid Lindgren, pictures
by Ilon Wikland, Magnet,
0 416 87670 6, 95p
'I can ride a bike! . . . I know I really truly can, so there.'
Five-year-old Lotta,
determined to prove her point,
borrows her next door
neighbour's grown-up bicycle,
careers full speed down the
hill and ends up back in the
neighbour's garden - in a rose
bush. But it all ends happily
when Lotta is able to prove
her point . . . well almost. A
good story to read to infants,
but this paperback edition has
a rather cramped appearance
and could have done with a
larger page size. JB

**Garth Pig and the Ice
Cream Lady**
Mary Rayner, Piccolo
Picture Books,
0 330 25942 3, 75p
The cunning baby-sitter from
Mr and Mrs Pig's Evening Out
makes another appearance,
this time in the guise of
Madame Lupino, an ice cream
lady wearing sunglasses, straw
hat and driving a pink and
brown Volkswagen. She entices
Garth Pig into the van and
there follows a hilarious chase
through hilly country with the
nine remaining piglets
frantically pedalling their
nine-seater bicycle - which
eventually proves to be
Madame Lupino's undoing.
'Again' is the cry every time I
read this story to a group of
infants, and I know a good
many who will be thrilled at
being able to own paperback
copies of one of their
favourites. JB

**Counting Boats and
Ships**
0 216 90851 5
and
**Counting Creepy
Crawlies**
0 216 90847 7
**Patchwork Picturebooks,
Blackie, 75p each**
How many children learning
to count (and presumably the
purpose of these books is to
help them) will see the relation
between the photograph on
the right-hand page and the
pattern of hexagons on the
left to which a reduced version
of the right-hand picture is
added? The whole thing
strikes me as thoroughly
confusing - the object being
added to make up the number
shown and illustrated on the
left is shown on the right-hand
side so, for example, the page
with 2 comes *before* the photo
of the object which is being
added to make up that
number. Lovely colour
photographs and nice big, bold
print, but if you want counting
books don't buy these. JB



Garth Pig heard her.
It was not a song about
icecream.



"Blue?" said Mama. "I think brown
would be much nicer. Brown."
"Blue," said Rebecca. "I want blue."
"All right, then," said Mama.
"I'll see what we have," said the saleswoman.

New Blue Shoes
Eve Rice, Picture Puffin,
0 14 050.316 1, 80p
Rebecca and her mother go to
buy new shoes. 'Blue?' said
Mama. 'I think brown would
be much nicer. Brown.' 'Blue,'
said Rebecca. 'I want blue.'
But later she is not so sure. A
story with touches of humour
for the reading adult to share
with the very young or for
older children to savour when
reading alone. The pictures
framed in broad margins
complement the text
beautifully and there's a nice
feeling of space (but American
spelling?). PT



There were fourteen rabbits at the clothesline on April fourteenth.

On the fifteenth Robert's mother took
him to the doctor because she
thought he was seeing things. There
were fifteen patients ahead of him.



On the sixteenth Robert found sixteen rabbits making
double-decker peanut butter and radish sandwiches
in the kitchen.

The April Rabbits
David Cleveland, pictures
by Nurit Karlin, Scholastic,
0 590 72008 2, 50p
It is really Nurit Karlin's black
and white illustrations of
those long-eared rabbits that
make this book such a delight.
The story tells of a small boy
who sees a rabbit on his way
to school on April 1st. Next
day he sees two rabbits, the
next day, three, and so on till,
'on the twenty-ninth day of
April twenty-nine rabbits with
suitcases tiptoed down the
drive and out of sight.' Next
day Robert didn't see a single
rabbit but that night, 'a
hippopotamus followed him
home.' Nice clear print. JB

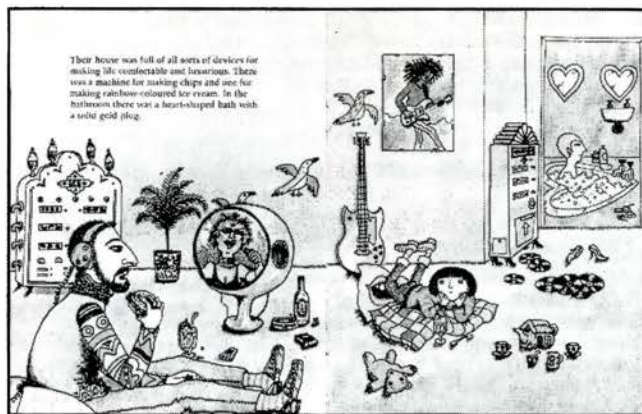
**The New Red Bike and
Other Stories**
Simon Watson, Young
Puffin, 0 14 03.1226 9,
70p
A good collection of stories to
read aloud to those round
about the age of Wallace
(five-ish), whose everyday
adventures such as being a
policeman, cleaning windows
and looking after gerbils,
comprise the sixteen very
short tales in this book.
Infants who read fluently may
well want to tackle it
themselves though the print is
rather small. JB

LOWER JUNIOR

Mrs. Pepperpot's Year
Alf Proysen, Young Puffin,
0 14 03.1265 X, 70p
A welcome addition to the
Mrs Pepperpot series. Twelve
listenable and readable stories
about the little old woman
who has a tendency to shrink
unexpectedly to the size of a
pepperpot. This collection
follows the movement of the
seasons and not least of its
delights is the lightly drawn
relationship between Mrs
Pepperpot and her husband,

who ends up getting 'a great
big smacking kiss'. PT





Hannah's Great Decision
Charlotte Firmin, Piccolo
Picture Book,
0 330 26029 4, 75p

The 'great decision' is to stay quietly in the country with an aunt whilst her pop-star mum and dad go off on an American tour. And a very wise decision it turns out to be, for her parents return exhausted and before long put aside their glamorous life-style and buy the country cottage next door to Aunt Maud. The colourful pictures reflect the candyfloss world of 'pop' and the satirical tale is probably best enjoyed by the over-sevens. A good one for lower juniors to read alone. JB

Puppy Summer
Meindert DeJong, Knight,
0 340 25504 8, 75p

A book full of summer. John and Vestri are spending the summer on Grandma and Grandpa's farm: three new puppies, a fishing trip and some very real and recognisable behaviour. Meindert DeJong's light touch with complex feelings give this simple story that bit extra which makes it a real gem for reading aloud or (for slightly older readers) alone. PT

John Brown, Rose and the Midnight Cat
Jenny Wagner, illustrations
by Ron Brooks, Picture
Puffin, 0 14 050.396 4,
£1.25

A most welcome Picture Puffin reproduced, I am happy to say, in a full-size paperback edition; reduction to the more usual, smaller picture paperback size would not have served well this beautiful book. The touching (but unsentimental) story tells of the special relationship between a widow and her sheepdog, which is threatened when Rose sees a cat in the garden one night. Ron Brooks' gorgeous warm illustrations give this book that special quality which draws children of all ages (and adults) to it again and again. JB

The Arabian Nights
Vol. 1 - 0552 52114 0
Vol. 2 - 0552 52115 9

Amabel Williams-Ellis, Carousell, 65p each
Splendid to have all these marvellous stories in such a good retelling available in paperback again. Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves, Sinbad the Sailor and Aladdin can all be at hand for just over £1 - and there are ideas for fancy dress and food for an Arabian Nights Party. PT

diminishing the usual clashes with big sister Libby. Not the best Blume for younger kids but it slips down like a yogurt and should find a steady readership amongst girls. SB

Willy the Squowse

Ted Allan, Puffin,
0 14 03.1160 2, 70p
A pleasant fable, stretched from short story to book by adding Quentin Blake drawings. Accidentally parted from friend/manager Joe, a performing squowse (half squirrel, half mouse) shacks up



in the hollow dividing wall between a comfortable bourgeois residence and a run-down slum. Tanners poked in one side get shoved out the other in a complicated ritual and the families in both houses find their lives transformed. Everybody's happy and the final resolution sees Willie reunited with Joe, who's briefly found success but not contentment without his old squowse buddy. A likely winner for all ages despite occasionally daunting vocabulary. SB

Cass the Brave
Griselda Gifford, Puffin,
0 14 03.1210 2, 80p

Griselda Gifford's books for juniors are probably Britain's nearest equivalent to Judy Blume's pre-teen stories. Contrived and very safe, there's still room for them in schools till we're given better, though Cass is weaker than Jenny and the Sheep Thieves and Because of Blunder. Cass, the awkward one of the vicar's twins, picks a leaf from the churchyard fig tree, then worries that she'll die as legend predicts. Minor domestic catastrophes encourage her fears. Structure and length are just right; the drawings and caricatures all wrong for putative realism. Would we get similar-but-tougher for boys if more children's book editors were male? SB

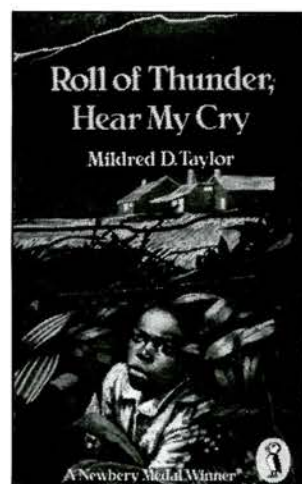
Dream of Fair Horses
Patricia Leitch, Armada,
0 00 691742 9, 75p

An above-average pony book, occasionally over-written as per conventions but with some variations from the usual story-line and grace-notes in the characterisation. Gill dreams about the Horse of the Year Show and there just happens to be an old hippophile living behind their 'new' house who owns a top-class pony. He chooses and

trains Gill, but will her avant-garde novelist father's temporary solvency last long enough to let the family stay? Or will Mr Ramsay die too soon, allowing his tweedy, snobbish daughter to grab Perdita? Technical enough to satisfy addicts but not one you need feel guilty about promoting. SB

Grimm Grange
William Browning, Lions,
0 00 671527 3, 85p

The Grimm Vice is Avarice and it prompts three conspirators to arrange a wealthy Singapore merchant's murder in order to rob his son - unwisely left in England with his dead wife's family - of the inheritance. Luckily for Martin, his father's business associates feel honour-bound to foil the plot. Though the comedy undercuts the thriller elements and the construction creaks in places, William Browning writes well and, with his large cast of grotesque caricature Victorians, is quite funny at times. But it's sophisticated, minority interest stuff; no more general use than Garfield. Here's a talent needing good editorial advice on subject matter; fingers crossed. SB



Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry

Mildred Taylor, Puffin,
0 14 03.1129 7, 95p

A very fine novel indeed. Fact-based, it describes one year in the life of a black land-owning family in 1930s Mississippi. There's tension and hatred a-plenty but lighter moments and the depth of feeling amongst the Logans counterbalance the violence, preventing the story from becoming an endless catalogue of horrors. It seems hefty but the preponderance of dialogue makes it read shorter than it looks. However, most kids do judge books by cover and weight so I don't see this getting the audience it deserves without considerable promotion, except amongst black teenagers already into Julius Lester etc. Newbery Medal winner. SB

JUNIOR/MIDDLE

Otherwise Known as Sheila the Great
Judy Blume, Piccolo,
0 330 26051 0, 70p

Judy Blume's great virtue is simplicity. As adults, we might prefer less superficial treatments of the problems she dramatizes but what a relief to read someone whose approach doesn't automatically exclude 50% of the potential audience from the outset. Sheila is scared (mildly, it transpires) of dogs, learning to swim, thunderstorms, ghosts... but a summertime house-swap and sessions at day-camp bring new friends, new insights into her character and triumphs over her fears, though without



OLDER READERS

A Proper Place

Joan Lingard, Puffin,
0 14 03.1036 3, 80p

The fourth in the very successful series about Kevin (a Catholic) and Sadie (a Protestant) who meet (The Twelfth Day of July), grow up and fall in love (Across the Barricades) and leave Belfast to marry and find some peace (Into Exile). A Proper Place finds them still in Liverpool, with a two-room flat and baby Brendan, and coping with Kevin's sullen seventeen-year-old brother, Gerald; but a job and a tied cottage on a Cheshire farm offer a new direction. Easy to read, easy to get 'hooked on', but not without substance. PT

A Summer to Die

Lois Lowry, Granada,
0 583 30402 8, 75p

Meg Chalmers is thirteen, her sister Molly is fifteen and the book (in Meg's words) is about the summer Molly is dying of leukaemia. The realisation comes slowly and the fact is counterpointed by Meg's new friendship with Will (who is seventy) and Ben and Maria, a young couple expecting a baby. It's a remarkable piece of writing – tender and full of feeling but totally without sentimentality, and finally rich with acceptance and optimism. PT

Our Bodies Ourselves

Boston Women's Health Book Collective, British edition – Angela Phillips and Jill Rakusen, Penguin,
0 14 00.4430 2, £3.50

A completely comprehensive guide to health for women from puberty to menopause and taking in sexuality, rape, birth control, childbirth,

dealing with doctors, etc. An invaluable reference book, informative, objective and supportive. What a pity there isn't one for men. PT

The Student Book 1981

Edited by Klaus Boehm and Nick Wellings, Papermac, 0 333 28603 0, £3.95

An applicant's guide to UK colleges, polytechnics and universities. A complete list of all institutions offering higher level courses, advice and information on finding your way through the jungle of jargon and abbreviations to make an application, a most useful introduction to what you are letting yourself in for in each study area (nearly eighty pieces – Accountancy to Zoology – written in the main by well-known academics in the area) and a short 'What It's Like' piece on each place written by a student or from a student viewpoint. This last is (from my own observations) the most unsatisfactory part. Not all writers seem to have been using the same criteria or even commenting on the same things. Some are better communicators than others and some seem unnecessarily jaundiced. Okay, so it's supposed to be subjective; but I dare say these pen portraits are likely to sway would-be applicants more than the more sober sections of this book so they are potentially very influential and should have been more carefully vetted.

Nevertheless it is good to have all this information between two covers and at so reasonable a price. Used with discretion and counselling from teachers and parents, sixth-formers should find it invaluable. Also in hardback, £8.95. PT

to perform such feats as turning a house upside down whilst an angry mum was out shopping, is enormously appealing. Definitely a hit as far as my class of four to sevens was concerned – 'Read it again,' they said, when I got to the end. JB

The Bee Rustlers

Jan Needle, Collins,
0 00 184043 6, £3.50

This workman-like kids v. thieves adventure – bees and honey as the swag on a present-day Northern farm – stands out from the pack by virtue of good dialogue, still surprisingly rare, unfortunately. Structurally effective in maintaining pace before the confrontation scenes (where dangerous bees enhance the tension), the chat painlessly outlines both the characters and their inter-relationships; Dad is a little out-of-the-ordinary, the others pretty much in the Leeson mould. It's slight, sure... but it'll be read, despite run-of-the-mill drawings. Let's hope such stories will soon oust most of the folk tales and historical grot from junior lists everywhere. SB



The Night Swimmers
Betsy Byars, Bodley Head,
0 370 30317 2, £3.25

Betsy Byars' recent novels appeal more through character than situation and, though I found this book touching and occasionally amusing, I wonder about kids' reactions. No stylistic problems here – it's pre-eminently readable – and the subject has worked well before but... is an adult viewpoint necessary to feel the heroic waste of Retta's attempt to mother her two younger brothers? And how much maturity does the excellent portrait of Roy (kindergarten age) demand for full appreciation? The splendid treatment of their charmingly neglectful father helps; so, in a sense, does the fraction-too-neat ending. Definitely one for teachers, anyway. Try it with teenage girls and gauge response. SB

Alfred's Oak

Tim Vicary, Hambleside,
0 86042 021 3, £2.95

Enemies Are Dangerous

Gwen Grant, Heinemann,
0 434 94139 5, £3.60

Two books about secret places in the woods, stolen jewellery and kids outwitting adults but Alfred's Oak, though flawed, has several good points whereas Enemies Are Dangerous is so badly written it's mind-boggling. Central to Tim Vicary's first novel is the rescue and safe return to the wild of a badger cub but, besides those elements already mentioned, he also drags in Saxon burial mounds, guardian ghosts, broken homes, football and other minor issues. All this clutter makes the book slow to start and a good deal heavier than you'd expect from the too-young jacket. But, once established, the story holds your interest; a possible read-aloud for juniors, especially if edited.

Hambleside Publishers (12 Southgate Street, Winchester) are relative newcomers to children's books but experience doesn't always exert its proverbial influence, as Heinemann show with the new Gwen Grant. It starts reasonably but once Samuel and Cyril (!) meet villains Toady, Foxy and Mr Ivov, it's all downhill. Issuing this drivel is a grave disservice to a promising writer (see Private – Keep Out!). Enemies Are Dangerous is so awful that it would've been a cert for an Arts Council award if there'd been one this year – and you can't say worse than that. SB

It's My Life

Robert Leeson, Collins,
0 00 184248 X, £3.95



Mum walks out and sixteen-year-old Jan is expected to look after Dad and Kevin. School and Peter Carey (who isn't used to having to ask twice), exams, the woman next door, Gran, the supermarket lady, friends, teachers – all take on a new perspective. A lot of novels for adolescents are about sexual pressures and problems but Bob Leeson is more concerned with the social pressures on girls and women. (He doesn't actually duck the sexual issue but he's not going to confront it – this is no Forever.) In Jan he has created a complex and believable female. Her do-it-yourself consciousness-raising is described with perception and humour. This could provoke a lot of discussion. PT

HARDBACK



Stanley and Rhoda
Rosemary Wells, Kestrel Books, 0 7226 5681 5, £3.95

As far as I am concerned Rosemary Wells can do no

wrong. In this book she has used full colour to illustrate the three delightful stories about a brother and younger sister (mouse) – real characters these. A résumé of the episodes would not do them justice; you need to get a copy of the book to appreciate the balance of words and pictures which creates a whole far greater than the sum of its parts. A must, this. JB

Sara's Giant and the Upside-Down House
John Cunliffe, pictures by Hilary Abrahams, Andre Deutsch, 0 233 97202 1, £4.25

The idea of a mischievous, friendly giant who could be called upon in times of need,

A Writer in School

Authors' visits take many forms. William Mayne's led to a book — SALT RIVER TIMES.

In recent years William Mayne has spent a lot of time in Australia, some of it working with children and their teachers in schools in and around Melbourne. One was Footscray Technical School (Junior department, kids 12-14). Footscray is a city suburb of Melbourne, heavily industrial and with a large immigrant population (Greek, Maltese, Chinese, Italian, Yugoslavian). It's also the setting for *SALT RIVER TIMES* (Iramoo is the Aboriginal name for Footscray). The river, the children, the houses, the trams, the park, the school are all as they are. Many of the real kids have reading problems. Here they knew exactly what they were reading about — themselves and their place. They loved it.

But how will it travel? We asked Steve Bowles.

Salt River Times isn't a book for everyone. Yet it has a great deal more humour and sheer vitality than any Mayne novel I can remember, for all their technical brilliance.

It's a sequence of stories set in a poor Australian community on the edges of an



Illustration from *Salt River Times* by Elizabeth Honey.

encroaching city. The focus shifts between individuals and groups — oldsters, teenage, nine-ish, even middle-aged in a couple of sections. Mayne's obsession with the relationship of the present to the past is still here. Lives touch and rebound, one small event leads to another and gradually a kind

of pattern emerges. Whether the lack of drama makes it necessary or whether it's ingrained in Mayne's pen, the style is often elliptical or oblique and it demands more perseverance than most kids can give. Nevertheless, there are definitely some stories (notably *Show and Tell*, *The House That Jack Built* and *A Puff of Steam*) which could be very useful if read to secondary kids as illustrations of particular narrative techniques or tricks of the writer's trade.

It's possible that some of the stylistic difficulties arise from the book's Australian-ness. Certainly Mayne seems to have thoroughly absorbed the idiom and speech rhythms, if one can judge by the resemblance to Ivan Southall (especially evident in the opening story). His ear for dialogue is put to good use and I'd not mind a small bet that some of the characters bear a considerable likeness to kids he worked with out there, especially some of the young girls who come across in particularly vivid and attractive fashion. The character-shuffling means that the book doesn't make a consistent appeal to any one age-group and I'm not sure about the garish cover either (though the illustrations are excellent). Not really one to offer individual kids then but a very stimulating set for teachers. At a mundane level, there are ideas for lessons just below the stories' surfaces; on a higher plane, you can just enjoy a Master at work. ●

Salt River Times

William Mayne, Hamish Hamilton,
0 241 10196 4, £4.95

Turn over for details of How to . . . organise a more conventional visit.

Summer Reading

Antelopes

The Vegetable War

Naomi Mitchison

241 10444 0 £2.25

Four Grannies

Diana Wynne Jones

241 10445 9 £2.25

White Hippo

Alexander McCall Smith

241 10460 2 £2.25

How Lazy Can You Get

Phyllis Reynolds Naylor

241 10459 9 £2.25

Gazelles

The Riverside Cat

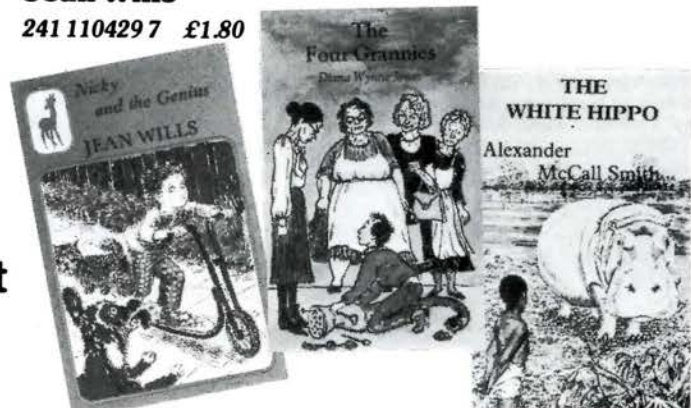
Pamela Oldfield

241 10430 0 £1.80

Nicky and the Genius

Jean Wills

241 110429 7 £1.80



from Hamish Hamilton

HOW TO... ORGANISE AN AUTHOR VISIT

Somewhere in Great Britain a group of hopeful Book Event organisers is having a conversation something like this:

LET'S GET AN
AUTHOR TO COME.

GREAT. WHO SHALL
WE HAVE?

(THERE FOLLOWS EXTENDED
DISCUSSION IN WHICH NAMES
LIKE ALAN GARNER AND ROALD
DAHL FEATURE LARGELY...)

GULP!

HOW DO WE
ARRANGE IT?

SILENCE.

If this scene is at all familiar...
Start here with these questions.

Why?

Why do you want the visit? As part of a book fair? To give the bookshop a boost? To show that authors are real? To create enthusiasm for books and reading? To encourage children to write?

Who?

Who is your audience? Parents? Children? Both? How many will there be? What ages? How organised?

What?

What do you want your visitor to do? Sign books? Perform? Talk? Smile nicely? Tell stories?

Where?

Where will it happen? Library? School Hall? Classrooms? Town Hall? Canal barge? Inside or outside? Do you expect your visitor to appear in more than one place?

When?

What is the date? Can it be changed? What time of day? How many times and for how long do you expect your visitor to appear? Have you left enough time to plan it (at least eight weeks – preferably twelve)?

Thinking about all that should leave you ready to go on to:

Who shall we ask to come?

Some authors enjoy meeting their readers; others hate it. Some are marvellous with children; others are disastrous. Some can travel long distances and stay overnight; others are more restricted.

There are hundreds of authors. How can you find one to suit you? Don't worry. Help is at hand.

A new list of authors, illustrators and poets willing to visit schools is now available from the NBL. The list contains addresses and/or publisher contacts, age range preferred, area preferred, availability and subject of talk. Also the NBL staff have helpfully provided a guide to geographical locations of authors and a listing of at least the last three titles published and presumably in print of each author, illustrator or poet.

The list is available from the NBL, Book House, 45 East Hill, Wandsworth, London SW18. Please send 30p in stamps.

And publishers can give good advice (ask for the Publicity person).



Maggy Doyle (in charge of Piccolo publicity) gave us this account of a typical phone call.

Book event
organiser

Maggy

BEO

M

BEO

M

BEO

Ring ring

'Hello.'

'Hello.'

'I'm organising a book event and wonder if you could supply an author?'

'Have you any idea of who you'd like?'

'Well, anyone you can recommend, really.'

'Right. What do you want him to do – sign books or do something?'

'Em. I think the kids will get more out of visit if they're involved a bit – we'd like

someone to do something – but how much will it cost?'

M

'Well, most authors do expect a fee of between £20 and £30 plus expenses but some don't charge anything except expenses.'

BEO

'Oh. I thought we might be able to have somebody free.'

M

'Mm. You may have heard of event-organisers not paying anything, but it doesn't happen often. Its mainly at book fairs when publishers take stands and books are in a represented selling situation (s'cuse the jargon). Then we'll ask authors to come along on our behalf and pay any costs ourselves.'

BEO

'Ah. Okay then.'

M

'Now when is it? How old are the kids, how many in each session, how many sessions, how long is each session? Will books be for sale – if so, through which bookseller? Will books be there or do you want me to provide them? Will you meet him at the station, give him lunch, look after him? What kind of pre-event publicity have you arranged? Will kids have read his books and be familiar with his work or will they be doing a project or other school work about his visit afterwards?'

BEO

'Em...'

M

'There's an author (X) who lives near you. He's terrific with kids – he'll leave them with a lasting impression that books are interesting, enjoyable, exciting, useable and relevant – and we've just published his second book. What about him?'

BEO

'Well... haven't you got anyone more famous?'

M

'Yes, we have, but they're often so busy that they don't have much time for personal appearances, and some do feel more at home with adult audiences.'

BEO

'Ah.'

M

'I can thoroughly recommend our new author, though; I've seen him in action. And he doesn't charge a fee...'

BEO

'Okay then.'

M

'Right. I'll ring him now and ring you back to confirm. Okay?'

BEO

'Okay. Thanks for your help.'

M

'Okay. Bye.'

Ring ring

BEO

'Hello.'

M

'Hello, sorry, he can't make it... now we've got another terrific new...'

How much will it cost?

Authors' fees vary (£25 per day plus expenses is average) so it is important to find out what is involved. Be clear about *exactly* what you want an author to do (e.g. number and length of appearances, size of audience, etc.) and settle all financial details with the author (or his publisher) *in advance*. You can save on hotel expenses by offering hospitality in someone's home — but *check first*; some authors insist on hotel accommodation.

Can you afford it?

Sometimes authors come *free*.

1. At book fairs some publishers will provide an author free. (Check and arrange this well in advance.)
2. During Children's Book Week specified authors agree to waive fees and publishers pay travelling expenses. (Booklet and details from: Margaret Turfrey, Book Marketing Council, 19 Bedford Square, London WC1B 3HJ)

You can get help from the Writers in Schools scheme.

Since 1st April this year the Arts Council of Great Britain has devolved this scheme to the Regional Arts Association.

In preparation for this devolution, the Arts Council prepared a selected list of writers to visit schools, colleges and other educational institutions during 1980/81.

For practical reasons, only a limited number of names appear in this list, which is intended as a starting point rather than a comprehensive guide. Teachers, education advisers and other organisers of visits should not feel obliged to restrict their invitations to writers listed there, and further suggestions may be obtained from Regional Arts Associations.

The list is available from: Arts Council of Great Britain, Literature Department, 9 Long Acre, London WC2E 9LH.

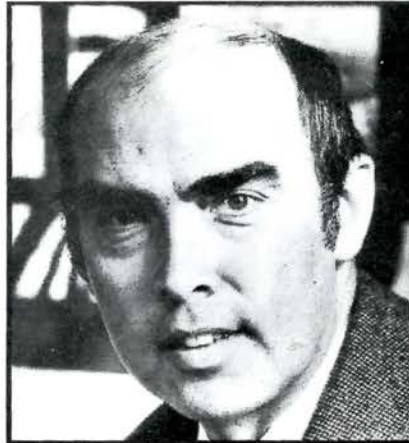
Under the terms of this scheme you may normally apply for reimbursement of up to 50% of the fee and also all travelling expenses where long distances are involved.

Fees and expenses should be agreed between you and the writer concerned, and applications should be made in advance of the visit to your Regional Arts Association. It's advisable to contact your Regional Arts Association to find out any regional variations to this pattern. (Some have been reported — please write to us if you meet any difficulty.)

During the first year of devolution of the scheme the Arts Council's Literature Department will be pleased to advise you and will be maintaining close liaison with all the Regional Arts Associations.

Similar schemes operate in Scotland and Wales, and lists of Scottish and Welsh writers may be obtained from the Scottish Arts Council (19 Charlotte Square, Edinburgh EH2 4DF) and the Welsh Arts Council (Holst House, 9 Museum Place, Cardiff CF1 3NX). ●

So — you've booked the author. You've got the cash. Is there anything else?



Bernard Ashley (a junior head and a writer who's done a lot of visiting) gives us an answer in

An author's eye view

You've got an author coming into the school: a real live writer who does professionally all that writing business the children are doing all the time. After authors no group has more demands made upon their written output than children in school have, so get your author into the classroom to help them, to show that books come from *people* like him, and like them. Don't throw him away with simply a smile-and-be-nice-to-the-customers stint in the bookshop. Let the children read ahead of the visit, have their questions ready, and generally capitalize on having him in the school. He will enjoy talking about writing to a group who have actually read one of his books just as much as he will like being celebrated in a corner of the bookshop.

Since he is coming, work at making him special. Get him talked about, from Assembly mentions to break-time chats. In a primary school you can probably even name the day after him.

Meet him at the school entrance at the agreed time, having provided fool-proof instructions on how to get there. (Meeting him at the station or telling him to get a taxi at your expense is a nice courtesy.) Certainly don't leave him kicking around a building being ignored (very easy in a comprehensive). It's good for his soul, really, but he may not feel inclined to come again.

I like a job when I'm in a bookshop. Bookshop stints are all right for illustrators and writers of books on how to make kites — they sit and illustrate or stand and make kites. But a writer of fiction, used to scribbling illegibly in tatty notebooks, needs something public to do. Ask him to tell a

story, take money at the till, declare something open — but don't leave him being a Well Known Figure around the place.

Check with him first whether he minds signing other authors' books. Some people are fussy about it. I sign anything, and others' books get, 'I hope you enjoy X's book' written in them. Be sure to have enough available on sale or return.

Involve your author's publisher. The firmer and surer you are about what you want, the better the publisher will respond. Ask for posters, showcards, book-jackets, photographs: and if they haven't got any on your author demand to know why not, for heaven's sake. He'll be grateful for that. There he is, pushing himself around, and they haven't got posters . . .!

One don't! Don't greet him with 'Of course, I haven't read any of your stuff myself, but you're very popular with the children.' (It's the 'Of course' that gets him.) If you can't do better than that, don't bother having him. He won't appear to mind your omission, but inside he'll be writing you off as a discourteous charlatan. And don't let him know you asked for someone else but the publisher sent him. He's very sensitive, or he wouldn't be a writer for children.

Overdo the cups of tea, and don't keep on about how good H.E. Todd was. Make sure he meets the Head — and if you can't say thank you in cash, give him a pen. He'll treasure it — and he writes with them.

Footnote:

Don't be afraid of new names. Being a famous writer doesn't automatically make you good at talking or meeting people. New writers or less well-known people are often fresher and more enthusiastic — and they may soon be famous!

Think about alternatives to writers or artists. Publishers, editors, designers, printers, bookbinders, booksellers, reviewers and librarians are all part of the world of books.

There are plenty of horror stories about how authors have been treated. There are also plenty about how they have behaved! If you follow our guidelines you will have done your part. If you feel an author hasn't come up to scratch tell him/her (politely), tell his/her publisher and tell us. Do the same if the visit has been a great success. Then we'll be in a better position to give each other good advice! ●

Blueprint for SUCCESS

* In advance

1. Be clear about what you want.
2. Contact authors and/or their publishers well in advance.
3. Make sure that you and the author are clear about fees and expenses, travelling arrangements, times, what he/she will do, etc. Confirm all details in writing (keep a copy) and keep in touch.
4. Arrange publicity: ask publishers for material, get children reading and talking, contact the local paper.
5. Arrange to have books for sale.

6. Arrange a timetable for the day's activities.

* On the day

1. Look after your author. Writers are human; they need food, drink, rest and reassurance just like the rest of us.

* Afterwards

1. Capitalise on the visit in work in school.
2. Write to your author (encourage the children to write too) to say thank you and give him/her some feedback.

Peter Firmin, the artist who gave shape to Basil Brush, Noggin the Nog, Ivor the Engine, Bagpuss and many other well-known characters, talks about

PUPPETS AND PICTURES

Pencil stubs to stained glass saints

I can't say I come from an artistic background. Mum used to paint flowers when she was young and Dad liked to write out texts and sayings in fancy lettering.

Mum would sit my brother and me down with pencils and paper when it was raining in the holidays to keep us out of her way. We were never short of materials. Dad worked in the railway telegraph office and he kept us supplied with ends of the rolls from the teleprinter and pencil stubs.

In my family my six daughters have always had drawing and painting materials around. So far, four of them have taken up art in some form. Katy is studying cartography, Josie is doing textile design, Hannah is at the Royal College doing graphics and Charlotte, the eldest, has written and illustrated several children's books.

I went to Colchester Art School after School Cert, just before the end of the war, and did illustration there for three years. After national service in the navy, I went to The Central School in London for three years. I met my wife Joan there. She was doing bookbinding and we got married the summer after I left.

I tried freelancing for a while but there was not enough work to live on. I took a job in a stained glass studio, painting saints in church windows. I think style in drawing comes from trying to conquer our weaknesses. I always had trouble with proportion and the sort of figures I draw now probably started then. I'm sure I was responsible for some very odd saints with large heads and big noses!

At the same time I was doing magazine illustrations and (when we could afford it) collecting illustrated books especially those of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century. I think I'd always wanted to illustrate books from the time I saw Cruikshanks' illustrations in our family's set of Dickens (Odhams). I've always been obsessed by that etching of Fagin in the condemned cell. But that didn't really start until I had been working for television for some years. It happened because of all the characters I created for TV.



Photograph provided by Peter Firmin.

Oliver and me planning Clangers.

From live TV (magnets, levers and string) to films

In 1958 I met Oliver Postgate (he was working for ITV devising gadgets for programmes like Dr Bronowski's science-series). We've been working together ever since. It started with a story about a mouse called Alexander, which Oliver had written for TV. He asked me to do the drawings.

It was a live programme in which the pictures were bits of card animated with magnets in front of the cameras. This method created problems which we solved by adding levers and strings. They became sort of cardboard puppets. It involved three cameras, actors, three animators as well as me doing the drawings and Oliver writing and reading the story.

All this became very expensive and the TV company asked us to think of some more economic way of making programmes.

This led to different methods of animation. Oliver bought a camera and made his first animation table. It worked, although it seemed to be made of firewood and bicycle chains. He taught himself the art of single-frame animation and we made films for the BBC like Ivor the Engine and The Saga of



From Ivor the Engine.

Basil Brush goes flying!

A Sound & Vision SPECIAL

Noggin the Nog. In these the figures were cut out of cardboard and moved bit by bit on a drawn background. What have been referred to as 'cut-price cardboard cartoons'.

Quite a team

Developing the cardboard puppet idea I devised a live programme for ITV with animated nursery rhymes and puppets. Rolf Harris was the first presenter of this programme called **Musical Box**. (That was before he became famous.) He was followed by Wally Whyton. Wally and I introduced talking puppets into the programme. Remember Joe Crow, Simon Scarecrow and Muskit — a sort of large water-rat? (I did the voice for him.)

We never really had a script. It's hard to believe, and I don't think I would dare do it now, but the 'links' in which the puppets chatted were all impromptu. Wally would phone me on Sunday. 'Well, what shall we do tomorrow, Pete?' We would decide on which of the Rhymes to do and the songs to go with it. We did two rehearsals and then the live programme. It was all done by lunchtime! We did that programme weekly for eight years.

We were quite a team, devising and producing children's programmes for the **Small-time** series. Oliver Postgate, Wally, Howard Williams and Ivan Owen who is the voice and animator behind Basil Brush... Well, he *is* Basil! Basil Brush is just one of many puppets I have made. He's the one who has achieved most fame and fortune.

Oliver Postgate and I have also made animated puppet films for the BBC. Between us we have created The Pogles (for **Watch with Mother**), The Clangers (a race of pink mouse-like creatures who live on a blue planet in outer space) and Bagpuss. These films are made in a barn where I live near Canterbury. Oliver and his family live in the same village. We've recently remade the Ivor the Engine films in colour for the BBC. We'd like to do the same with Noggin!

Books at last

All these television programmes led to books. Ivor the Engine, Noggin, Clangers, Pogles and Bagpuss, have all found their way into hardback and paperback in stories written by Oliver Postgate and illustrated by me.

As well as the longer stories of the Noggin saga we did some in simpler form as 'first readers'. Kaye and Ward wanted a new character for some work in this style so I wrote the Basil Brush stories — my career as a writer had begun. So far I have written and illustrated ten; they've been published in America and South Africa and even translated into Japanese.

A real illustrator

Until recently the only books I'd illustrated not based on our own characters were occasional ones like **The Blue Peter Book of Limericks and Odd Odes**. But I've just become a real illustrator! Macdonald and Janes asked me to illustrate an E. Nesbit story, **The Last of the Dragons**, as a picture book and I'm doing a second one for next year. I do seem to have drawn a lot of dragons. There was the little Welsh one in Ivor, the ice dragon in Noggin, the soup dragon in Clangers, and then there was **Stanley, a Tale of the Lizard** (Deutsch). That was a long poem written by Peter Meteyard, an old school friend of mine.

I'm working at the moment on two new books which I've written with completely new sets of characters. When I have an idea I like to work it out right to the finished book stage. That is, I type it out, paste it on the pages and make it into a dummy book with pictures and a finished-looking cover. I want the publisher to say: 'I wish we had published that book.' So that I can say: 'And so you can.'

Books illustrated by Peter Firmin

The Last of the Dragons, E. Nesbit, Macdonald, 0 354 08098 9, £2.95

Stanley, the Tale of the Lizard, Peter Meteyard, 0 233 97071 1, £3.25

Basil Brush readers, Peter Firmin, Kaye & Ward

The Windmills, 0 7182 0330 5, £1.75

On the Trail, 0 7182 0329 1, £1.75

Three Tales of Basil Brush 1, 0 7182 0331 3, £2.95

Three Tales of Basil Brush 2, 0 7182 0332 1, £2.95

Noggin books, Oliver Postgate, Kaye & Ward

Nogmania, 0 7182 1180 4, 95p

Noggin Saga: The Blackwash, 0 7182 0300 3, 75p

Noggin Saga: The Icebergs, 0 7182 0301 1, 85p

Noggin Readers: The Money, 0 7182 0367 4, 75p

Noggin Readers: The Storks, 0 7182 0368 2, 75p

Noggin books, Oliver Postgate, Picture Lions

Noggin and the Flowers, 0 00 661708 5, 85p

Noggin and the Island, 0 00 661707 7, 85p

Ivor the Engine books, Oliver Postgate, Picture Lions

The Dragon, 0 00 661500 5, 75p

The Elephant, 0 00 661501 5, 75p

Snowdrifts, 0 00 660875 2, 75p

The First Story, 0 00 660874 4, 80p

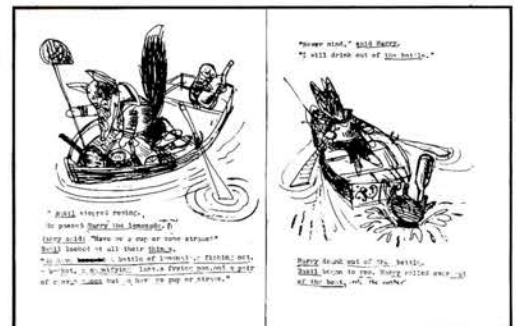
Bagpuss in the Sun, Oliver Postgate, Picture Lions, 0 00 660830 2, 65p

Bagpuss on a Rainy Day, Oliver Postgate, Picture Lions, 0 00 660689 X, 80p

I enjoy putting lots of detail into picture books. That way they can be enjoyed on different levels. A book should give pleasure to as many people of different ages as possible, and a picture book should be well enough done to please the adult and the non-reader as well as the child who can read it. After all 'books are for keeps'. ●



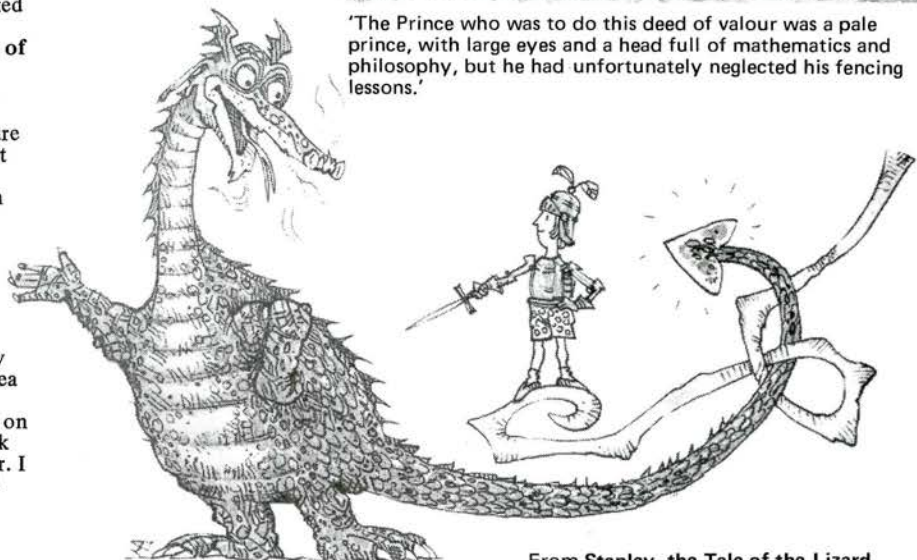
Noggin the King.



How I plan a book — a dummy rough for Basil Brush Boating.

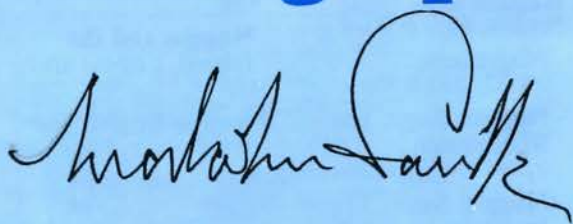


'The Prince who was to do this deed of valour was a pale prince, with large eyes and a head full of mathematics and philosophy, but he had unfortunately neglected his fencing lessons.'



From **Stanley, the Tale of the Lizard**.

Authorgraph No.3



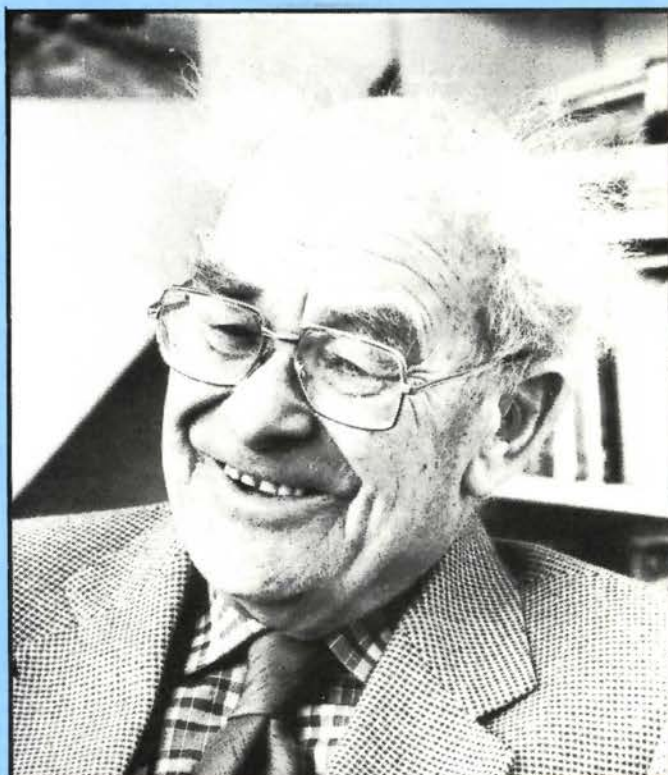
Malcolm Saville was born in Hastings in 1901 and 'went to boarding school at nine; something I've never regretted.' His first job was with Oxford University Press 'looking out books for booksellers' orders'; the start of a lifetime in publishing. Publicity, editing, writing: he's done it all. The writing started with football reports. 'I got £1 a match. It was wonderful training. You had to write at terrific speed.'

Writing for children began in 1942. His family were in Shropshire at a farm ('Coombe Head — not far from Witchend') discovered in the uneasy pre-war period. In Hertfordshire as Deputy Night Controller for the ARP two nights a week, he began a story set in Shropshire. 'I suppose I owe a great debt to Arthur Ransome; he used genuine backgrounds and my daughters liked reading him.' He sent *Mystery at Witchend* to his daughters who loved it. Was it written specially for them? 'Oh, no. I was in the business. It was definitely for publication.'

Newnes took it. 'Then I had the luck that every author wants.' It got on *Children's Hour* ('beautifully dramatised by Barbara Sleigh') and was a great success.

There are now twenty Lone Pine books, plus *The Buckingham*, 'Michael and Mary', 'Susan and Bill' for younger readers, the 'Nettlefold' books, the Jillies, lots of non-fiction and (his particular favourite) seven Marston Baines stories. Written for 14 to 15-year-olds, these secret service thrillers with an all-adult cast, foreign settings and a dash of ('very pure') romance are now being avidly read by fans of eleven and up who complain that they are not in paperback. The fight is against (in turn) drug trafficking, smuggling, racism, Satanism — anything which threatens individual liberty and freedom of speech. While some children may see the issues, most seem simply to enjoy the general mix. 'Dagger and the Flame was the best suspense you ever kept me in.' 'While I was reading *Dark Danger* my legs went like jelly. I was so excited and frightened my tummy felt quite peculiar. I feel I want to read it again and again.'

Accused of being 'middle-class' and 'old-fashioned' (the stories have been cut and modernised — he thinks badly — for paperback), he says of his Lone Piners, 'What they are and how they behave is very much more important than the



way they speak. I don't think they live in an idealised world.' There are happy endings and unambiguous morality but 'I think children need that kind of certainty. The world is an ugly enough place.'

His readers (2 million Lone Pine books sold) seem to agree. The stories apparently are compulsive. 'My brother doesn't read very much. I think you may have changed that. He borrowed my *Mystery at Witchend* yesterday and now he's nearly finishing *Seven White Gates*.'

Recent work includes some countryside books (*Wild Flowers through the Year*, Transworld, is due in August) and an anthology, *Words for All Seasons*, Lutterworth. 'I've wanted to do it for years. I've put in all the things that have meant a great deal to me.' But all his readers want to know, 'will there be another Lone Pine book?' 'I think I'm going to write one. The problem is do I go back in time? You see I've really tied everything up in *Home to Witchend*. I think I will have to go back and give as much space as I can to the twins.'



Chelsea Cottage, Winchelsea, Sussex (Malcolm Saville's well-known address) is one of two white-painted nineteenth-century cottages built, so the

story goes, by a sea captain with the money from a salvage operation. Chelsea Cottage (on the right) is named after his ship; next door after the ship he salvaged.

The sitting-room bookshelves hold several spy stories. 'I'm an addict, especially for John Le Carré.' Upstairs, past a 'gallery' of photographs of his four children and twelve grandchildren, in a tiny room with a dormer window (in the picture) a wall of

bookshelves holds copies of the 85 books (many of them in different editions) he has written for children. Here Malcolm Saville works at his books and at keeping in touch with the thousands of children who write to him (every day brings a batch of letters). Twice a year he writes and prints a newsletter about himself and his books which goes to every child who sends a second-class stamp. The back of his door is covered with photographs sent by readers.



Malcolm Saville has a way with places

'They seem to come alive on the page and even though I have visited some of the places before I want to see them again when I've read a story set there.' — So says a reader

A Saville tour takes in Shropshire, especially the Long Mynd, Sussex, especially Rye, Suffolk (Southwold), Yorkshire (Whitby), London, Dartmoor, Cornwall (Marazion), Dorset (Lyme Regis), and abroad with Marston Baines to Provence, Luxembourg, Amsterdam, Italy (Venice and Rome), Mallorca, Brittany and the Dolomites.

Here's a glimpse of the real background to some of the Lone Pine stories.



Clun — 'one of the quietest places under the sun'. But not in *The Secret of Grey Walls* where the Lone Piners set up camp in the ruined castle and help to foil a gang of sheep-stealers.



The altar of Mithras at Stone-in-Oxney Church, Sussex, from *Treasure at Amorys*.



Top left: Hatch Holt is really New Pool Hollow in Shropshire.
Mid left: From *The Elusive Grasshopper*, Watchbell Street (Traders Street) and Hope Anchor Hotel (The Gay Dolphin) in Rye.



Leintwardine, alias Bringewood Chase in *The Secret of the Gorge* — the old stone bridge over the River Teme.

Marshbrook alias 'Onnybrook' — the level crossing and signal box 'where Dickie longed to pull the levers'.



'There was the larch wood clinging to the side of the steep valley. There was the house itself with its two gabled windows under the roof, leaning against the hillside. There was the white gate between the low stone walls just where the lane stopped, and there was the same stream . . . singing down the side of the lane towards Ingles.' — *Lone Pine Five*. Prior's Holt — the model for Witchend — and Hamperley — the original of Ingles Farm.

Photographs in this section provided by Malcolm Saville.

What kind of a person is Malcolm Saville?

Lively, energetic, friendly, a compulsive and enthusiastic talker. He holds firmly to 'traditional values'. 'I'm a very strong believer in family life' and, like the Lone Piners, thinks friendship and loyalty are important. Although officially retired,

there's still 'lots to do'. Apart from writing, lecturing and keeping in touch with readers, he shares many interests with his wife. They love 'travelling, walking, the theatre and being together'. They dislike 'people who drop litter'. There are 'two children and their families within reach', 'plenty of friends' and a 'fierce social life in Winchelsea'. Above all he is a professional. If every publisher promoted books as energetically as Malcolm Saville there would be a lot more children reading. Like every writer he wants to be read and to make sure that children can get hold of his books when they want them. (He's a supporter of school bookshops.) 'I don't think a professional writer can ever really stop.'

How are the books written?

'I'm first influenced by a place. I read it up and find out all I can about it. I study maps. Sometimes it's a newspaper item that

'If there were many writers like you, many more people would read out of school time.' (A 13-year-old) Malcolm Saville at the door where messages like this arrive by letter and in person.

arouses my interest. I went to Southwold because I'd read about the east coast floods and thought it might make a story.' (It did — *Sea Witch Comes Home*.) The windmill in the picture which appears in *The Gay Dolphin Adventure* is in Winchelsea. For the Marston Baines stories he visited every location. The settings are as real as he can make them and when he takes liberties with reality the readers are told in an introduction.

'I don't write any fiction unless it is very carefully plotted. I do a synopsis, chapter by chapter, with dialogue, character notes, what I want the reader to know. This goes to my editor.' When the synopsis is clear, the writing starts. 'I write in pencil, ballpoint or pen, as the mood suits me, on the back of old typescripts. I'm not awfully fond of typewriters. The next morning I correct in another colour.' It then goes chapter by chapter to a typist he's met once in 35 years. 'She can read my writing.' In all a book usually takes four to five months.

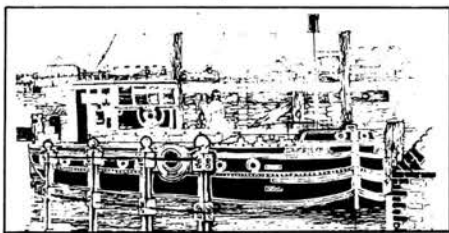
There's only one golden rule. 'Have a curtain to every chapter. They must read on. I've failed unless a child wants to read on.'

Malcolm Saville's books are published in hardback by Heinemann, Collins and Lutterworth, and in paperback as Armada Lions, Aslan Lions, Transworld How and Why, Carousel and Knight.



Break in the Sun

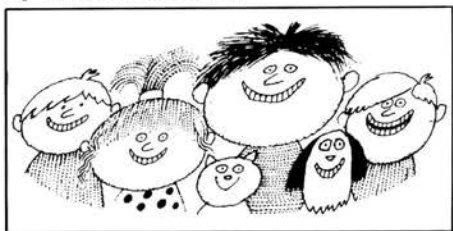
by Bernard Ashley



This is the story of Patsy who runs away from home when her mother remarries — and also of her friend Kenny, who helps to look for her, and in doing so has more fun than ever before in his life. To be televised in January 1981. £3.95

Curious Tales

by Miloš Macourek



A collection of bizarre and gently cautionary tales, told with a reckless disregard for the laws of science and the adult world. Superbly illustrated. £3.95

Revolt at Ratcliffe's Rags

by Gillian Cross



Three teenagers are studying conditions in a small clothing factory as part of a school project, but things get out of hand. There is a strike, the media move in, the children's parents get involved, and the children are caught in the middle. £3.95

The Lost Umbrella of Kim Chu

by Eleanor Estes



Set in New York's Chinatown, this is the story of a little girl's search for a very special missing umbrella. £3.50

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The Latchkey children find that the tree in their favourite playground is to be cut down. Their efforts to save it provides the story of this perceptive, humorous and realistic book. Illustrated by Charles Keeping.

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Orphaned by a car crash Neil Miller finds himself facing an even greater crisis as a deadly virus sweeps the country, eventually leaving only him and two girls alive in London. A compulsive story of fear and loneliness by the author of *The Guardians* and *The Lotus Caves*.

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To Be Published in the Autumn**The Intruder**

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WILLIAM TREVOR

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The Challenge of the Green Knight

IAN SERRAILLIER

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**Heinemann Educational Books**

22 Bedford Square, London WC1B 3HH

Athletics meetings, concerts, Sunday cricket, theatre productions — wherever you turn something is being sponsored by someone.

More and more groups and organisations are looking for sponsorship as a vital source of finance. How does it work? What are the sponsors getting out of it?

Lloyds Bank sponsors the School Bookshop Association and Children's Book Week. We asked Pat Bowman (head of public relations with Lloyds)

What's a Bank doing in the World of BOOKS?



'Sponsorship' is one of the most loosely used promotional words of the age. Some people take it to mean vast sums of money to keep football going and allow the sponsor to put his name on the players' backs. Others use it to cover private patronage to prop up national and regional cultural activities that are not funded by the authorities as they are in most civilised countries. Yet others use it as equivalent to charitable donations or as an excuse for asking for other people's cash to pay for activities that should be made to pay for themselves.

What does it mean to a bank? In Lloyds we have reached a clear view, based on some years of experience — and a few failures. Without a tangible end product to sell, we need more than anything to sustain and defend our reputation. We don't have much of a need simply to publicise our name: after all, we've been around for 215 years and we're in every High Street in the country. So what we seek from sponsorship is to reach audiences that matter to us through activities that are of interest and use to them, and have some degree of social value. As a responsible financial organisation, we do not involve ourselves in fripperies!

The audience that matters most to us is the young. Our future personal customers are the schoolchildren of today; once they have opened accounts, they will seldom move to another bank. Obviously, too, the better-educated young are likely to have a better quality of account. Similarly, it is the better-educated young people of today who will in a few years' time have influence on commercial accounts.

But business aims are certainly not the only reason for our interest in young people. With more than 43,000 employees in Great Britain alone, and more than half of them under 25, we have a constant need to recruit educated young people.

There are many ways to reach the young audience. All kinds of leisure activities — including sport — appeal to them and provide useful means for sponsors to identify themselves. We have chosen the schools route for many of our sponsorships: a programme of chess in schools and universities; a



series of A-level study weekends with eminent lecturers; schools theatre workshops devised with the New Shakespeare Company; a schools public speaking contest with the British Junior Chamber; a Science Forums teaching pack with the British Association; a conservation project pack with the British Trust for Conservation Volunteers; the Council for British Archaeology school award; and the National Youth Orchestra of Great Britain, which Lloyds Bank has sponsored for five years.

With this approach established as bank policy, to become involved with books for young people was only natural. First, in 1978, came sponsorship of Children's Book Week, to which the bank now contributes £6,000 each year. The Black Horse and Chiboo the owl stand side by side on all the promotional material and last year scores of local bank managers took part in promotions with schools.

From contact with the Publishers Association — and largely due to the enterprise of Margaret Turfrey, children's book officer — came meetings with the National Book League to discuss further sponsorships. The School Bookshop Association was a natural choice because it offered Lloyds Bank a clear opportunity to reinforce its direct involvement with education and to make a positive contribution towards literacy and the relationship with books, libraries and bookshops that is an essential part of civilised life.

There is never a shortage of ideas on how a bank might spend its money. In 1979 there were more than 1,200 letters and telephone calls suggesting that Lloyds might like to offer support for everything from a national orchestra to an individual who wanted to cycle across the Sahara. The selection has to be careful, just and related to the bank's commercial objectives and social perceptions.

That's another reason why the School Bookshop Association has a little of Lloyd's money and a strong sense of support for a totally worthwhile activity. ●

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HOLIDAY
REVIEW
SPECIAL



Six weeks of school holidays will soon be upon us and, come rain or shine, staying at home or going away, in this country or abroad, indoors or out, the right book in the right place at the right time can make a lot of difference.

We've put together four pages of suggestions for books (mostly paperbacks) to make a good time better and the less good bearable.

GOING
PLACES
AND SEEING
THINGS



From *The Book of Art:
A Way of Seeing* (Benn).

London

Whether you are visiting for a day, a week or live there all the time, two books to save you a lot of time and trouble and introduce you to things you might not know about:

Children's Guide to London, Caroline Brakspear and Helen Mann (Collins, 0 00 102305 5, £1.25).

Crammed with information. Revised this year so up-to-date about opening times etc. No prices, but useful telephone numbers. Get it in advance for exciting planning.

Kid's London, Elizabeth Holt and Molly Perham (Piccolo, 0 330 25570 3, 70p) First published in 1972 so be careful; but not a lot has changed. Particularly good for things outside central London.

For a first-time young tourist you can't beat **Learnabout... London**, John Moyes (Ladybird, 0 7214 0594 0, 40p) Colour photographs and all the major attractions.

and **Haunting at Hampton Court** (Macdonald Ghosts series, 0 356 06556 1, 60p) provides a colourful background to a visit to the Haunted Gallery in the Palace where Catherine Howard, fifth wife of Henry VIII, was arrested for being unfaithful.

The collection of life-size dinosaurs (made in 1853) which lurk in the trees around the Crystal Palace Park lake also feature in

Fanny and the Monsters (Heinemann Long Ago Children series, 0 434 94935 3, £2.75) Penelope Lively's light-hearted story of Fanny – eldest of a large Victorian family – who finds a dinosaur skeleton.

For those emerging from Madame Tussaud's Chamber of Horrors

Crime and Justice (Beaver Famous Lives series, 0 600 33710 3, 70p) might appeal. It gives details of famous villains (fact and fiction) from the bible to the present day.

Museums

With so much imaginative provision for children in museums the days of being 'dragged round' are long gone. But younger children may need help with the idea of a museum.

For talking about it with the youngest beforehand

The Child's Play Museum, P. Adams (Child's Play (International) Ltd, 0 85953 094 9, £1.45)

is useful and imaginative. Pictures have cut-outs so that suits of armour can appear in museum and tournament, pots in show-case and on a stone-age fire.

Up the age range a bit,

Visiting a Museum, Althea (Dinosaur, 0 85122 200 5, 60p) (available later this month) was produced with help from Birmingham Museum, the Ashmolean (Oxford), the Fitzwilliam Museum (Cambridge) and Edinburgh Museum. A help in learning how to look.

Art Galleries

It's more difficult for children to get involved with paintings – no knobs to press or twiddle. In

Just Look... (Kestrel, 0 7226 5676 9, £4.95)

Robert Cummings involves the reader, by direct questions, in looking really closely at over 70 paintings in different styles and from different periods. His approach is easy, conversational, unpretentious. A real eye-opener for the uninitiated, adult or child.

Eye opening in a different way is

Ways of Seeing, John Berger (Pelican, 0 14 02.1631 6, £1.25)

A stimulating companion for older readers at any art exhibition. It questions how we 'see' or make sense of what we look at.

For younger children

The Book of Art: A Way of Seeing (Benn, 0 510 00035 5, £5.95)

is itself visually exciting. With games and things to do, photographs of buildings, paintings, sculpture and the natural world, it's an invitation to look, enjoy and create. Expensive but well worth it.

Ladybird have three books of **Great Artists**, 40p each

Book 1. Rubens, Rembrandt and Vermeer (0 7214 0254 2)

Book 2. Leonardo da Vinci, Michelangelo and Raphael (0 7214 0263 1)

Book 3. Van Gogh, Gauguin and Cézanne (0 7214 0280 1)

Castles, Country Houses, Cathedrals and Cities

Warnes's Observer Books are faithful old friends and still excellent value at £1.50. A useful guide is **The Observer's Book of Castles**, Brian Davison, (0 7232 1593 6) containing what, where, when, why and by whom information and a gazetteer.

For older children, or parents who want a quick source of information to put flesh on architectural bones while 'doing' houses

Home Sweet Home, M. G. Graham-Cameron (Dinosaur, 0 85122 174 2, 70p)

is useful. It's published for the National Trust so it may be available on site.

Someone who can really bring buildings and the past to life is David Macaulay. It's hard to beat his superb series for Collins, each £3.95.

Cathedral: The Story of its Construction (0 00 192150 9)

Step by step through the building of an imaginary Gothic cathedral.

City: A Story of Roman Planning and Construction (0 00 192151 7)

Castle (0 00 195128 9)

The story of the building of a thirteenth-century Welsh castle. His text and black and white line drawings are so clear that the reader feels involved in every process.

Doing the same thing in a different style are Usborne's Time Traveller books. Lively drawings, full of fun and colour, pack in a deal of accurate information about how it was. 99p each, paperback.

Knights and Castles (0 86020 068 0) brings life even to the most unpromising heap of stone

and **Rome and Romans** (0 86020 070 1) would be useful in Bath and on the Roman Wall. Great especially for juniors.

Watching feeding



Zoos

Understanding Zoo Animals, Rosamund Kidman Cox (Usborne, 0 86020 251 8, £1.50)

An intelligent and thought-provoking guide behind the scenes. Would make any zoo visit more interesting.



Battles

There's a lot packed into **1643 The English Civil War, The Siege of Gloucester and First Battle of Newbury**, Roger Gates (Hippo, 0 590 70008 1, 90p) and we don't just mean the title.

You can re-fight both events, decorate the text with coloured stamps (provided) and play the 'Race for Newbury' game.

If that fires interest follow up with

The Ghostly Army (Macdonald Ghosts, 0 356 06558 8, 60p)

a story of the battle of Edgehill. (Lower Juniors)

For King or Commons, H. T. Sutton, (National Trust series, Heritage/Batsford, 0 7134 1727 7, 95p)

a short story of a divided family, factual information and details of how to 'See where it happened'. (Juniors)

Puritan and Cavalier, James Barbary (Puffin, 0 14 03.1037 1, 95p)

The whole story told in lively journalistic style. (Secondary)

For visiting HMS Victory in Portsmouth (or the National Maritime Museum at Greenwich),

Ladybird's Nelson (0 7214 0557 6, 40p) contains good accounts of the battles including diagrams to show Nelson's tactics.

There is also a Macdonald's Ghosts for Scotland - **Ghosts of Culloden** (0 356 06559 6, 60p)

The Seaside

The Beaver Book of the Seaside, Jean Richardson (0 600 38307 5, 55p)



A jolly, general book about all the sorts of things you might find or do there.

Another general book but with the emphasis more on wildlife is

Malcolm Saville's Seaside Book (Carousel, 0 552 54054 4, 35p)

A similar approach but with far more pictures, mostly coloured, is **Seawatching**, Tony Soper and Noel Cusa (Dinosaur, 0 85122 130 0, 60p)

TRAVELLING AROUND

— with an eye on History



How Place-Names Began, C. M. Matthews (Beaver, 0 600 36598 0, 65p)

Fascinating facts about the origins of place-names in the British Isles and abroad. A good thing to keep in the car — or panniers.

History Hunter, Victor E. Neuberg (Beaver, 0 600 34557 2, 65p)

Things to look out for in town and country which could well be starting places for further activities like walking along the Ridge Way or visiting the Ironbridge Gorge Museum in Coalbrookdale, as well as fascinating in passing.

There's a similar taste of everything in **Usborne's Junior Guide to Britain** (0 86020 295 X, 85p)

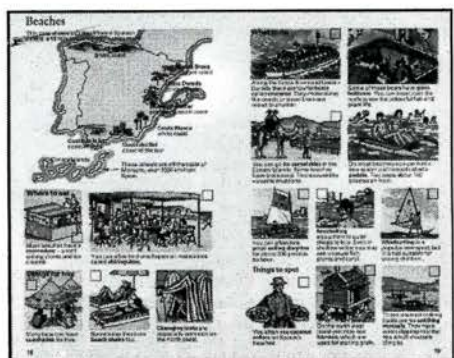
Britain: Four Countries One Kingdom, Jean Ellenby and Suzy Siddons (Dinosaur with the British Tourist Authority, 0 85122 188 2, £1.40)

A brief history of how Britain came to be and an attempt at a pen picture of the way we live. Really intended for visitors from abroad (take note if you've got one coming to stay) but useful for natives who are not quite sure how it all happened and think they should know!

Going Abroad

Last year lots of travellers in France (adults and children) found Usborne's **Junior Guide to France** and **Junior Guide to French** — simple phrases and how to say them — useful and fun.

This summer there are also **Junior Guides to Spain** (85p each).





Camping

Camping for Young People, Anthony Greenbank (Piccolo, 0 330 25745 5, 80p) An introduction to lightweight camping – not the sort where you take along the teapot. Informative, practical, sensible – full of good advice.

Usborne has three Outdoor Guides. Parts of these would be useful to eight-year-olds practising in the back garden. Together they make a useful set for older beginners venturing a little farther.

Living Outdoors (0 86020 214 3, 75p)

Exploring and Finding the Way (0 86020 216 X, 75p)

First Aid and Emergencies (0 86020 218 6, 75p)

Available bound together at £1.99 – but then it's a bit big for a pocket.

On Two Wheels



The Piccolo Bicycle Book, Richard Ballantine (0 330 25017 5, 60p)

Good advice on touring (useful addresses) as well as maintenance.

Bicycles and All About Them (Practical Puffin, 0 14 049.136 8, 50p) has more colour, pictures and picture instructions for those put off by woggles of text.

On Foot

The Walker's Handbook, H. D. Westacott (Penguin, 0 14 046.267 8, 95p) must be the most comprehensive guide around. Indispensable for the novice and a useful reference for the seasoned walker.

Anyone venturing into the great outdoors needs to know about survival. Piccolo's **Survival for Young People**, Anthony Greenbank (0 330 24444 2, 60p) is serious and sensible.

Anyone reading **Stay Alive with Eddie McGee** (Carousel, 0 552 54160 5, 65p) should feel able to cope with jungle swamps or desert vastness. Alongside and inside Rowan Barnes Murphy's jolly cartoons there's a lot of useful advice. Good for those about to be intrepid – and for armchair Robinson Crusoes or Desert Island Disc choosers.

DOING THINGS



Sport

Whether watching the Olympics or attending a local athletics meeting, fans will welcome **The Puffin Book of Athletics**, Neil Allen (0 14 03.1275 7, 90p)

It's got a bit of history, all the record-breakers and a fascinating section which analyses each event and tells how an athlete trains for it.

For more of that and to learn how to be 'tomorrow's champion'

Athletics, Tom McNab (Knight, 0 340 25494 7, 95p)



Tom McNab, one of the best-known coaches around, aims to provide the sort of national training scheme that was not available when he was in secondary school. In the form of question and answer, it's clear and very readable, and there are well-captioned diagrams. Useful for teachers as well as aspiring athletes.

Families or friends who are always arguing about things like how long you can hold a netball before you throw it or who would really like to know how to play American football, need

The Beaver Book of Sporting Rules, Lea Clarke (0 600 38369 5, 85p) a guide to over 40 games and sports.

On the other hand for some the summer may be just a brief interlude between one football season and the next. With

The Beaver Book of Football, Tom Tully (0 600 33699 9, 60p)

August can be spent developing skills and tactics ready for September.



Observing Wildlife

One way to start is with Usborne's **Spotter's Guides** or Dinosaur's National Trust **Nature Notebooks**.

There are 17 **Spotter's Guides** (not all about wildlife). Prices: 65p, 75p and 85p.

Illustrations are clear and notes for identification helpful. Material from eight of the guides (Birds, Wild Flowers, Trees, Fishes, The Seashore, Butterflies, Insects, and Animal Tracks and Signs) is available in a composite **Guide to Wildlife** (0 86020 319 0, £4.95 hardback).

A shorter version containing material from British Flowers, Trees, and Birds is the **Spotter's Handbook** (0 86020 159 7, £2.50 paperback).

There are eight **Nature Notebooks**. The text for identification is slightly more technical in its language and there is space for recording observations. At 45p/50p each these are good value.



If 4 and 5-year-olds want to join in, there are lots of **Younger Spotter's Guides** – a stroke of genius (Usborne, 35p/40p). For the very youngest start with **Shells** (40p) or **Seashore** (35p). Easy to hold and, best of all, what is in it is easily found. Limpets, for instance, are very good at staying still to be observed and ticked.

Also for the under-sevens **Colours of Flowers**, Elsie Wrigley (Dinosaur, 0 85122 206 4, 60p)

contains beautiful illustrations of most of the common wild flowers and **Animals at Your Feet**, Althea (Dinosaur, 0 85122 223 4, 60p)

encourages a closer look at common insects.

Older children taking up serious observation will want John Gooders's **How to Watch Birds** (Pan, 0 330 25029 9, 95p) which covers just about everything you need to know – and includes a bibliography of the author's personal recommendations.

From observing what is happening it's a short step to setting up your own experiments.

Exploring Nature, Derek Hall (Beaver, 0 600 36589 1, 50p) is full of ideas for studying soil, plants, bacteria etc. Most can be done with materials found at home. (Useful ideas for school too.)

Try Something New – Or Find Out Some More

The Dragon Book of Fishing, Andrew Backhouse (Granada, 0 583 30371 4, 95p) is an invitation to join the brotherhood of coarse anglers. The style is chatty; it's easy to read and divided into clear sections.

The Puffin Book of Freshwater Fishing, Roger Pierce (0 14 03.0873 3, 60p) contains chapters on Bottom Fishing, Spinning and Fly Fishing, and suggestions for home-made tackle – to see if you like it.

Learnabout . . . Taking Photographs, Colin Garratt (Ladybird 0 7214 0538 X, 40p) is crammed with useful hints and illustrated with colour photographs to demonstrate the points. Tremendous value.

Taking Photos, Roger Vlitos (Macdonald Whizz Kids, 0 356 06333 X, 85p) has a section on trick photography.

Looking around for something to do at the seaside? Ignore the sea and concentrate on the beach and cliffs.

Collecting Pebbles, Rocks and Fossils, George Kay (Beaver, 0 600 32181 9, 75p) tells where and how to look, what you are likely to find and suggests ways of recording, cataloguing and displaying your finds. Lists of museums to visit.

A handbook for an increasingly popular hobby

Treasure Hunting, Ian Elliott Shircore (Macdonald Whizz Kids, 0 356 06334 8, 85p)

Lots of advice on how to go about it (with or without metal detector) and the lively, readable presentation that goes with this series.

Usborne's **Beginner's Guides** have clear instructions and pictures for every step. **Woodwork**, Tony Lawler (0 86020 309 3, 85p)

is very 'professional' — proper tools, proper joints, proper wood. For absolute beginners but probably best for those who have done a bit at school and are looking for fun things to make — a go-kart, a sledge. Hints on designing too.

Those confined to a hammer, a saw, some nails, second-hand wood and off-cuts will find

Carpentry (Practical Puffin, 0 14 049.135 X, 50p) more useful. Instructions for making a primitive ladder, bird table, small animal cage, raft, musical instrument etc.

Groups of children (or adults helping with a play scheme) should welcome **Constructions** (Practical Puffin, 0 14 049.162 7, 60p)

It's about making BIG things — a glide bar, portable stage, a woven rag rug, mud bricks.

Two books — two approaches to sewing

The Puffin Book of Sewing, Jackie Andrews (0 14 03.1116 5, 95p)

is traditional and professional. Advice on sewing machines, choosing and using a paper pattern, helpful hints and short cuts. Clear and practical.

Fashion for Free, Janet Allen (Penguin, 0 14 00.5369 7, £1.50)

is full of ideas for recycling old clothes and jumble sale finds. No complicated sewing — only plain seams. Not for the slave to fashion — more for creating the 'individual' look.



Semicircular summer dress from **Fashion for Free** (Penguin).

The best bet for 'cookers' this summer looks like

The Blue Peter Book of Gorgeous Grub, (Piccolo, 0 330 26195 9, 75p)

Forty recipes for the sort of food children like to eat and make.

Things to do at Home

You don't have to go miles into the country to get involved with wildlife;

A Zoo in Your Home, Arnold Darlington (Transworld Wonder Why, 0 552 57035 4, 75p)

takes in not only cats and dogs but spiders, cockroaches, silverfish, moths . . .

The Nature Trail Book of Garden Wildlife (Usborne, 0 86020 259 3, £1.50) takes in soil (including making a wormery), birds, plants, insects, spider watching . . .

Unusual ideas for growing things occur in **Things to Do with Plants** (Macdonald, 0 356 07051 4, 60p)

Large clear pictures, easy text and simple manageable ideas.

and **Jam Jar and Saucer Gardens: a Garden in your Bedroom**, Arnold Darlington (Transworld Wonder Why, 0 552 57032 X, 75p)

Instructions and ideas for growing mould, bulbs, trees from pips or cuttings, ferns, shoots from beans ('Maybe Mum has recipes for using the tasty vegetables you have produced') and making bottle gardens, model landscapes, etc. All very lively with Rowan Barnes Murphy's cartoony illustrations.



Wet days, friends away, nothing to do

Make a model train set from **Huck Scarry's Steam Train Press-outs** (Collins, 0 00 138255 1, £1.95)

Huck Scarry's **Steam Train Journey** was a great success with young children. These press-outs require no scissors or glue — just folding and slotting. A possible for combining older and younger children in a project — train-loving dads (or mums) will want to join in too.

Helen Oxenbury's 'Split' books for Methuen Walker Books, £1.95 each

729 Puzzle People (0 416 89090 3)

729 Animal Allsorts (0 416 89080 6)

729 Curious Creatures (0 416 89100 4)

have been a great success with lower juniors who spent ages creating ever sillier combinations. (A bunch of secondary kids in the school bookshop couldn't resist them either.) The next step is to make your own.

The imaginative and meticulous will really enjoy

Making a Miniature Village, Guy R. Williams (Puffin, 0 14 03.0908 X, 75p)

Clear instructions, lots of ideas — the project could last all summer.

Ideas for everyone (and no expensive materials) in **Recyclopedica**, Robin Simons (Puffin, 0 14 03.1107 6, 80p)

Do-it-yourself board games, puppets, printing . . .

For passing the time in traffic jams, waiting rooms, wet tents . . .

The Guinness Book of Animal Marvels (Piccolo, 0 330 26030 8, 75p)

The Guinness Book of Most and Least (Piccolo, 0 330 26031 6, 75p)

Bound to be the success of the season. Packed with all that totally useless information that adults and children find so irresistible. (Get your badges now!)

Fascinating Facts, Gyles Brandreth (Hippo, 0 590 70004 9, 60p)

A dictionary of amazing information on everything under the sun. Good source for home-made quizzes.

There is a seemingly endless stream of quiz and puzzle books. From the latest bunch we've picked

The Once Upon a Time Quiz Book, Deborah Holder (Armada, 0 00 691732 1, 70p) with a historical theme.

Motorbike Quiz, Peter Coatson (Beaver, 0 600 20155 4, 65p)

For addicts only.

The Armada Quiz and Puzzle Book, Doris Dicker and Mary Danby (0 00 691511 6, 70p)

Lots of variety from a tried and tested series.

The Beaver Book of Word Puzzles (0 600 39479 4, 65p)

Playing around with words — anagrams, definitions, puzzles. Fairly easy to quite difficult.

Puzzle Party, Douglas and Christine Power (Knight, 0 340 25358 4, 70p)

Mostly picture puzzles — general knowledge, words.

The Jigsaw Book of Puzzles, Clive Doig (BBC, 0 563 17818 3, £1.25)

Based on BBC 1's **Jigsaw**. Very popular, judging by the times it has been 'borrowed'. Can be difficult to follow, 10+.

The Clue-Crackers Crossword Book, R. S. Philpott (Knight, 0 340 20488 5, 50p)

Crossword on different subjects — sport, music, medicine, literature.

THE LAST LAUGH!



Parents who respond to Knock Knock with Groan Groan had better watch out. Piccolo is turning July into a joke jamboree.

Imported from America

The Silly Joke Book, Stoo Hample (0 330 26054 5, 60p)

'One policeman to another. "Look out and see if our blinker light is working." "Yes. No. Yes. No. Yes. No . . ."

The Chocolate Marshmelephant Sundae, Mike Thaler (0 330 26110 X, 60p)

Musical animals? A violon, a pianoceros, an oboe constrictor, a contra babboon, an alliguitar . . .

BOOKS FOR KEEPS

NEWS

FOCUS ON
BARNSELEY

The Book Marketing Council has chosen Barnsley as the target for its first book research and promotion project. Preliminary research into the present book scene will lead into discussions with local groups and individuals and culminate in a full-scale book promotion — Barnsley Book Week?

Obviously schools and school bookshops have a role to play. Get in touch with us if you are in the town and working with children and books.

From the Federation
of Children's Book
Groups

A new journal ABC — About Books for Children. A blend of information, ideas and opinions. Contributors include Betsy Byars, Beverly Cleary, Robert Leeson and Anne Wood. Single copies from Martin Kromer, 22 Beacon Brow, Horton Bank Top, Bradford, West Yorkshire, BD6 3DE.

ROLF HARRIS
AT SEA?

Probably not — unless the Bookboat, Greenwich's floating children's bookshop, slips its moorings while he's declaring their second Children's Book Fair open at midday on 19th August.

It's on during the holidays this year. 'That's not because school parties give us the horrors,' said Bob Cattell. 'It's just that we really like to see children and parents enjoying books and buying them



together.' Local families and visitors to Greenwich are not likely to complain.

Around twenty-five publishers will be displaying and selling their full range of children's books from stands laid out in a massive, long thin tent which will run 150 feet along the shore by the Bookboat. The boat itself will be used for special events, reading sessions by authors, drawings by illustrators, competitions and magic shows. Some of the names being mentioned are Donald Bissett, Leon Garfield, Tom Tully and Bernard Ashley.

The Capital Radio Fun Bus will probably be turning up and weather permitting there will be Punch and Judy, children's theatre, painting murals with well-known children's book illustrators and so on going on outside. It sounds like a great day out — with only one problem. How to fit in the Cutty Sark, Gipsy Moth II and the Maritime Museum as well.

The fair is open on 19th, 20th and 21st August. Further details from Bob Cattell or Christine Pierce on the Bookboat — Telephone 01-853 4383.

TOP 20

- | | | |
|--|---------------------|---------|
| 1. Silly Verse for Kids | Milligan | Puffin |
| 2. The Enormous Crocodile | Dahl | Puffin |
| 3. The Bionic Banana | Churchill | Piccolo |
| 4. The Magic Tree and the Flyaway Birds | Gleese | Piccolo |
| 5. Jokes and Riddles from A—Z | Howard | Armada |
| 6. It's Too Frightening for Me | Hughes | Puffin |
| 7. Help! I am a Prisoner in a Toothpaste Factory | Antrobus | Knight |
| 8. Grange Hill Stories | Redmond | BBC |
| 9. Guide to Spacecraft | Kerrod | Piccolo |
| 10. The Television Adventures of Worzel Gummidge | Waterhouse and Hall | Puffin |
| 11. Jackanory: Lizzie Dripping | Cresswell | BBC |
| 12. Our John Willie | Cookson | Piccolo |
| 13. Happy Families series | Ahlberg | Puffin |
| 14. The Guinness Book of Animal Marvels | Greenway (ed.) | Piccolo |
| 15. The Guinness Book of Most and Least | Greenway (ed.) | Piccolo |
| 16. Grange Hill Rules O.K.? | Leeson | Lions |
| 17. Frog's Pond | Blamey | Collins |
| 18. Goose Lays an Egg | Piers | Magnet |
| 19. How to Eat Fried Worms | Rockwell | Piccolo |
| 20. Piccolo Book of Jokes | Gossett | Piccolo |

This list is taken from Books for Students' sales

Sparrow Books —
a new paperback
imprint

For a year now Arrow Books have been hatching this new venture in children's paperbacks. This summer Sparrows will fly the nest.

They are aimed at 3 to 13-year-olds, with particular emphasis on 3—9s. The list will concentrate on non-fiction with fiction only by

'established authors', and it will include some large-format picture books.

The first titles, out at the end of August, will be The Discoverers Series (70p each) including such predictable topics as Prehistoric Animals, Football, Birds, Outerspace and Your Body. Each has 24 pages of full colour and if you think they look like something from Macdonald Educational that's probably because they've been associated with the project. September's authors include Dodie Smith (The Midnight Kittens, 80p) and Barbara Euphan Todd (Worzel Gummidge and the Treasure Ship, 85p) and in October we can look forward to yet more Enid Blyton and (an enterprising move) The Adventures of K-9, 65p, small picture books for six-year-old fans of Dr Who. We hope to review these for you as they appear.

Read any good stamps
lately?

A special stamp issue featuring Charlotte Brontë, George Eliot, Emily Brontë, and Mrs Gaskell is due out on 9th July.



Children's Books and Princess Alexandra in a Barn

We don't know if those at the NBL see their move west from Piccadilly to Wandsworth as a move into the country (will they all be sticking straw behind their ears and saying 'Aarr!' soon?); but the designers of **Children's Books of the Year 1979** have certainly gone all agricultural and are giving the books a farmyard barn setting.

The exhibition will be opened by Princess Alexandra on the afternoon of 23rd July and will stay open until 9th August (Monday – Saturday, 10.00 a.m. – 6.00 p.m.).



Pat Hutchins who will be appearing at Children's Books of the Year. Photograph courtesy of Puffin Books.

As well as over 300 of the best books published in 1979 the exhibition includes a bookshop and information

desk, and there will be competitions, storytelling and visits from famous authors and illustrators, including Pat Hutchins, Agnes Szudek, Colin McNaughton, Grace Hallworth, Shirley Hughes and Nancy Chambers. The books this year have been selected jointly by Elaine Moss and Barbara Sherrard-Smith (school librarian, secondary school teacher and reviewer, currently compiling CBY 80).

CBY 79 at the NBL, Book House, 45 East Hill, London SW18 2HZ. Telephone: 01-870 9055/8. Storytelling: Tuesdays and Thursdays at 3.00 p.m. Special appearances: Wednesdays and Fridays at 3.00 p.m.

Children's Books of the Year 1979 Catalogue available from July, Julia MacRae Books, £3.50. Touring exhibition for hire – details from the NBL.

IN BRIEF

Brighton Books for Children Conference

26th – 29th August. Authors, illustrators, publishers, workshops on presenting children's literature. Details: Department of In-Service Education, Brighton Polytechnic, Falmer, Brighton, Sussex.



CBW poster. This poster, in superb full colour, and balloons available at cost. Contact Margaret Turfrey, BMC, 19 Bedford Square, London WC1B 3HJ (01-580 6321).

Covent Garden Book Fair

27th July – 2nd August.
10.00 a.m. – 8.00 p.m. A carnival of books – music, dancing, poetry, jazz, author appearances, demonstrations, competitions, a children's day.



Penguin/Times Picture Book Award

First prize £500. Open to anyone who has not previously had a children's picture book published. Guaranteed publication by Kestrel and Puffin for the winner.

Competition rules from Penguin Young Books, 536 King's Road, London SW10. Entries to be submitted 18th August – 30th September. Judges include Quentin Blake and Brian Alderson.

Free help for parents (and teachers)

Dinosaur have had all their titles assessed for reading level according to the stages of the Individualised Reading approach (Cliff Moon). A leaflet explaining the approach and listing the books and their 'stages' is available from Dinosaur Publications, Beechcroft House, Fen End, Over, Cambridge, CB4 5NE.

Kids Grow with Ladybirds contains lots of good advice to parents especially about early learning and pre-reading activities (the area in which Ladybird books are at their best and strongest). Unfortunately it gives the impression that all a child's book needs can be met by Ladybird – 'the Ladybird range is limitless'. That's surely a claim no publisher could – or should – make. ●

Just some of the best sellers published in our first five years -

Usborne Publishing, 20 Garrick Street, London WC2E 9BJ

Eleanor Farjeon and Mother Goose



The Mother Goose Award — a bronze goose egg plus £100 — is given each Easter to 'the most exciting newcomer to children's book illustration'. In 1979 the first ever award went to Michelle Cartlidge for *Pippin and Pod*. This year Reg Cartwright won the prize with his pictures for *Mr Potter's Pigeon*.

But what's so important about illustration anyway? And why give a prize to a newcomer? Chris Powling, one of the judges, explains.

The first question is easily answered. At their best pictures are far more than mere spoonfuls of sugar to help the words go down: their concern is no less than the quality of our *seeing* as we grow up. The first fine art (in both senses) a child is likely to encounter may well be the work of a Burningham, a Sendak or an Ungerer. Unlike other prizes, though, the Mother Goose Award aims to encourage artists at the *outset* of their career — also to encourage publishers to invest in them. Here lies the answer to the second question: the panel of judges is on the look-out for the Burnings, Sendaks and Ungerers of tomorrow.

The non-starters, of course, are easy to spot: illustrations that are merely a pro-job . . . the sort of lettraset cartoonery that anticipates art-by-silicon-chip; illustrations that trade on the cute-cum-cosy (and glory be to Holly Hobby); illustrations that bow, scrape and tug their forelocks to existing picture-book superstars.

In contrast, what distinguishes the front-runners is their *unexpectedness*. Who could have anticipated Michelle Cartlidge's exquisite, crowded landscape in *Pippin and Pod*, peopled by sturdy, clump-about mice which look halfway between a vole and a valentine?

Who wouldn't be surprised as well as delighted by the artwork of Reg Cartwright in *Mr Potter's Pigeon* — an archetypal grandad in a world like an archetypal Eden spruced up by Douanier-Rousseau. Each in their different way drips freshness, hums with warmth . . . and makes you eager for more. Good illustration, like good writing, keeps you turning the page.



Recently, the publisher Tom Maschler predicted a renaissance in children's book illustration and remarked, 'if there are 25 outstanding artists now I hope and expect that in five years there will be 200.' Is this army of eye-catching illustrators to come from a recycling of existing talent or a recruiting of new talent? The Mother Goose money — not to mention its bronze egg — is on the latter.

The Mother Goose Award is given by Books for Your Children — Booksellers.

Winner 1980

Mr Potter's Pigeon, Reg Cartwright, written by Patrick Kinmonth, Hutchinson, 0 09 139450 3, £3.50

Runners up

I Believe in Unicorns, Elizabeth Falconer, written by Adam Munthe, Chatto & Windus, 0 7011 2437 7, £3.50

Sybil and the Blue Rabbit, Jane Johnson, Benn, 0 510 22523 3, £3.50

Abbey Lubbers, Banshees and Boggarts: A Who's Who of Fairies, Yvonne Gilbert, written by Katherine Briggs, Kestrel, 0 7226 5537 1, £5.95

Winner 1979

Pippin and Pod, Michelle Cartlidge, Heinemann, 0 434 93140 3, £2.75



Photograph of Dorothy Butler courtesy of The Bodley Head.

Mother, grandmother, teacher and specialist children's bookseller, Dorothy Butler of Auckland, New Zealand, received the Eleanor Farjeon Award for 1979 for 'outstanding services to children's literature'.

Dorothy Butler first became interested in the subject of children and reading while teaching English at a secondary school. Her interest was focused on the pre-school years when her own children were small, and she became involved in the Play Centre Association in New Zealand. As her children grew up, she started her own business from home, selling children's books and providing an advisory service for parents. This expanded so rapidly that she was soon forced to move to larger premises, and the business has flourished ever since. She lectures, runs a remedial reading service, manages to enjoy the time spent with her eight children and ten grandchildren, and has recently turned author. She believes passionately that 'books should play a prominent part in children's lives, from babyhood: that access to books, through parents and other adults, greatly increases a child's chances of becoming a happy and involved human being.'

This belief shines out clearly in her writing. Her practical advice and warm enthusiasm make *Cushla and her Books* (Hodder & Stoughton, 1979, 0 340 22768 0, £3.95), reviewed in *Books for Keeps* 2, and *Babies Need Books* (Bodley Head, 1980, 0 370 30151 X, £4.95) essential reading for all parents and teachers.

Babies Need Books is just out. There is a section for each year from 0-6 and an extensive annotated booklist for each age. Excellent value.

Later this year Kestrel will publish her *The Magpies Said* — a collection of New Zealand stories. ●

SOUND AND VISION

It was a great pleasure to see the BAFTA (British Association of Film and Television Arts) award for the best children's TV programme go to *The Book Tower*.

Produced by Anne Wood for Yorkshire TV, it has a deceptively simple format. Each week six books are presented by Tom Baker as 'something you might like to read'. He is enthusiastic but treats his audience as equals rather than coming the superior adult or jolly uncle. Dramatised extracts, stills or illustrations with voice-over readings give just a taste of each book. It's pure magic.

Magic of a special kind for children it seems. Anne Wood explains: 'We filmed *The Little Mermaid* (on Scarborough beach!) for the last series and we got letters saying "I liked the bit where the mermaid's tail melted and disappeared" — but we didn't show that on the film. Who says television blunts children's imagination?'

The second series brought over 10,000 letters (75% of them from children). Anne Wood again: 'They came from all sorts of children, lots from homes without books. They write about the books, of course; but they also send money for books. We had to have a notice saying, "please go to your bookshop." Then they write, "We tried the bookshop — they'd never heard of it." The saddest letters are from kids who've got the books but can't read them. I realise this is a problem with this sort of programme. I usually say, "Take it to school and get your teacher to read it aloud."'

When Joy Whitby (executive producer at Yorkshire TV and pioneer of children's TV) put the idea for *The Book Tower* to the ITV Children's Committee the response apparently was less than wildly enthusiastic. How could children, just home from school, want to watch something about books! The award, plus 6-7 million viewers, have changed all that. But *The Book Tower* has not only jolted stereotyped assumptions about what children will watch, it has also, for lots of children, changed the way they look at books.

'We make the programme for kids who like books and we have to be true to our subject matter — books. But we also try to be as entertaining as we can and hope that anyone will want to watch. In fact we're getting a lot of children on the fringe of books. It's aimed at 8 to 13-year-olds but is watched by 4 to 18-year-olds (and grandparents). Librarians write to say, "Thank you for moving good books off the shelf."'

Thank you indeed to women (why is it always *women*?) like Joy Whitby, Anne Wood and Anna Home (BBC) for refusing to accept that young viewers are only interested in pop and pap, and for insisting that books are not something you escape from, but something you can escape into.

Let's hope the success of *The Book Tower* gives us more programmes about children's books on radio (*Junior Bookshelf*?) and TV.

The Book Tower returns for a new eight-week series in Christmas week. We will have details for you of the books to be featured well in advance.

The Woofits — a greetings card spin-off!

From greetings cards (yes, greetings cards) to ITV to Collins Cubs. Apparently the Woofits have 'an enormous following'. Either I haven't been frequenting the right stationers or Woofit-appeal is confined to the north of England (Yorkshire to be precise) whence they come.

Anyway Michael Parkinson 'finds them irresistible' and has diversified Michael Parkinson Enterprises Ltd into writing for children or, as the press release puts it, 'weaving stories around these improbable furry beings'. The Woofits are certainly furry. They are also unfunny, flatly-written and stereotyped. On a greetings card furry is enough — for books give me Paddington or Little Grey Rabbit who are furry plus — and also in Collins Cubs, 40p each.

In View In Brief

The *Bagthorpes* serial has been postponed to early 1981 (BBC). *Flambards* is due back for a re-run in the autumn (Yorkshire TV).

September

1. The start of a 26-part serial of *Heidi* (BBC). A European production dubbed into English.
2. *The Trials of Worzel Gummidge* (Southern TV). 13 half-hour episodes.
3. *Fair Stood the Wind for France*, H. E. Bates, is in the BBC 'Love Story' series.

Coming this autumn, Priestley's *The Good Companions* — a serial adapted by Alan Plater (Yorkshire TV).



Tom Baker with the famous Book Tower teapot out of which all sorts of surprising things come. Courtesy of Yorkshire TV.



The Latchkey Children — from left to right, Ben (Bobby Collins), Goggles (Nigel Hayward), Duke (Ian Roberts), Froggy (Peter Harrison) and Etty (Indra Ové). Photograph courtesy of Thames Television.

For the youngest

Bod is back on the screen this month. *Bod* books by Michael and Joanne Cole, Methuen, 40p.

Watch Again!

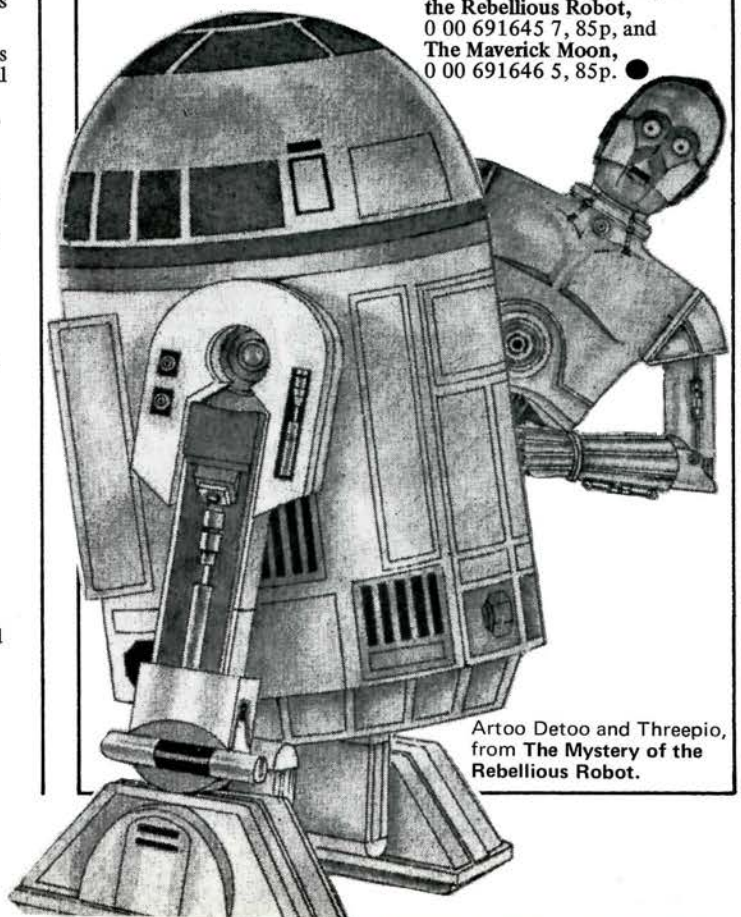
A successor to last year's *Watch* and based on the very popular BBC Schools TV series. Topics included — Robinson Crusoe, farming, ancient Egypt, zoos. Songs, information and ideas, clearly presented — Macdonald Educational, £2.95.

The Latchkey Children

by Eric Allen (OUP) is now an ITV serial from Thames. The story of five children taking on the G.L.C. in a fight to save the tree in their local playground (the Council wants to give them a nice concrete railway engine instead) was first published in 1963. It's dated superficially — sausage, tomato and beans in the King's Road for 1/4 (7p) — but it's still a good read. There's a paperback version available from Magnet, 80p.

Star Wars

For younger readers who've seen the film but can't read the long novel *The Empire Strikes Back*, Armada have two picture storybooks featuring the Star Wars characters — *The Mystery of the Rebellious Robot*, 0 00 691645 7, 85p, and *The Maverick Moon*, 0 00 691646 5, 85p. ●



Artoo Detoo and Threepio, from *The Mystery of the Rebellious Robot*.

School trips, school camps, family holidays. David Green gives some practical tips on

Keeping Children Happy



Photograph by Corinne Butler.

On the journey

'Look out and admire the view, dear!' rarely works for long. Variety is the key (although recently a friend of mine enjoyed a peaceful seven-hour car journey by playing cassettes of stories for his two young children). Word games like 'My Aunt likes coffee but she doesn't like tea', where the object is to work out why she is so fussy and strange, go down well.

She likes letters but she doesn't like mail, books but not stories, greens but not peas — in fact she only likes things which contain a double letter.

Try inventing 'detective stories', where they have to work out, by asking questions, what really happened.

'A man lives on the fourteenth floor of a block of flats. Every day he goes down in the lift from the fourteenth floor to go to work. At night when he returns he gets into the lift at the ground floor level, presses the seventh floor button, gets out of the lift at the seventh floor and walks up the stairs the rest of the way to the fourteenth floor. Why does he do that?'

(He's a dwarf and can't reach any higher than the seventh floor button.)

The Puffin Book of Car Games is a great source. 'Traffic Bingo' requires pencil and paper. Each player draws a nine-square grid (or have some ready). He then fills in the blank squares with nine two-digit numbers of his own choice. One person, appointed 'caller', calls out the *last two* digits on the number-plate of each approaching car. (Ignore those with only a single digit.) Any player with the called number crosses it out. The winner is the first person to get three crosses in a line (vertically, horizontally, or diagonally): Bingo!

When you are there

It is important not to organise every single moment of every day. Children need some time to relax and play at their own pace or just to be alone. On the other hand, to provide nothing organised but excursions is to miss out on a unique opportunity. You don't need to be a specialist for these.

Outdoor Day-time Activities

Games, apart from the usual team games which not every child wants to play, can vary from an It's a Knockout Tournament to smaller games like this one for two players called 'Halt'.

1. Two players of similar height stand back to back, and at a signal start to walk away from each other. Either one of the players (as arranged) calls 'Halt' and both stop walking and turn round.

2. One of the players must now give an estimate of the number of strides he will take to reach the other. When he has given this figure, the other may either give a lower one if he thinks he can do it in fewer, or say 'Do it'. If a lower number is given, the bidding continues until one says 'Do it'.

3. The player then told to do it must, without a run up, stride towards the other. If he does it in the number estimated, he is the winner; if not the other wins.

A match is the best of five games.

'Wide Games', involving plenty of space, can be as elaborate or as simple as you choose to make them. Colony Holidays has its own

formula with a strong fantasy element (usually based on a literary source such as one of Edward Lear's nonsense poems) where the object of the game might be to find the Pobble's toes. The game can involve tracking, following trails, stalking, decoding, doing tasks, avoiding baddies, etc. They require a considerable amount of organisation and preparation but are well worth the effort. Don't make the codes too complicated though; it leads to immense frustration if children can't crack them. (Why not give them the key?) 'Orienteering', both at night or during the day, is an exciting variation.

Other Activities

Singing is excellent for bringing people together. Unfortunately today many children have a built-in resistance to it. However, it is possible to win back interest and enjoyment. I like to start with action songs which are akin to games and therefore immediately acceptable. Rounds and echo songs achieve instant harmony without great difficulty.

Drama. Drama games are a good way in. Some would say that child drama should be personal and not public — I believe there is a place for both. Performing in front of others can be both challenging and nerve-racking, but in the end is a rewarding experience and I have observed many children grow in stature and self-confidence as a result of the appreciation of their performance.

Making Things. A simple idea, using a branch of a dead tree, is to let children saw sections off the branch (preferably about two inches in diameter) and spend a long time smoothing each one with fine sandpaper. Then drill a hole, and perhaps write a name or the place where you are staying on it using a waterproof felt pen. Coat it with polyurethane varnish, thread string through the hole and you have a pendant to take home.

Evening Activities

TV games are very popular, especially variations on 'Call My Bluff', 'What's My Line', or 'Double Your Money'. This last has become 'Double Your Smartie', 'Double your Winegum' etc. and is simply a quiz game in which the contestant answers questions (they need to be geared carefully to the abilities of the children playing). The right answer gets a smartie. The child can then decide whether to stop or try to answer another one for two smarties and so on.

A programme of stories, told or read, poems, and records always goes down well. This needs preparation to get a balance between short and long, live and recorded, comic and serious, etc.

Indoor party games

My current favourite is 'Happy Families'.

1. Take from a pack of 'Happy Families' enough cards for each player to have one. They must add up to complete families.

2. Each player has a card and there is a 'mill around' period while players swap them face downwards.

3. On the signal 'Happy Families', each player keeps the card he has, looks at it, and by shouting the name of the family, e.g. 'Grits', 'Bones', etc. tries to find the other members.

4. When the family is complete, they all sit on one chair in a set order, e.g. Mr on the chair, Mrs on his lap, etc. The last family to sit down is out.

Happy Holidays!

Useful books

Chorus: The Puffin Colony Song Book, edited by David Green, Puffin, 0 14 03.0941 1, 95p

Codes and Secret Writing, Herbert S. Zim, Piccolo, 0 330 02822 7, 40p

100+ Ideas for Drama, Anna Scher and Charles Verrall, Heinemann Educational, 0 435 18799 6, £1.40

Puzzlers for Young Detectives, K. Franken, Piccolo, 0 330 23196 0, 40p

The Puffin Book of Car Games, Douglas St P. Barnard, Puffin, 0 14 03.0845 8, 65p

Colony Holidays has a wealth of experience although most of it is not published. Courses are run, however, and details can be obtained by writing to: Colony Holidays, Linden Manor, Upper Colwall, Nr Great Malvern, Worcestershire WR13 6PP. ●

David Green is Staff Development and Training Officer for Save the Children. He worked as a teacher in South Yorkshire for five years, and ran numerous school journeys, before running a children's community centre in Cambridge. For the last ten years he has worked for Colony Holidays both as a director of holidays and a trainer. He is married with one small child and lives in London.



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The SBA Handbook: The What, Why and How of School Bookshops

At the moment this is no longer available. It's being rewritten and will be ready for the autumn term.



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NEW

From time to time we will have on offer badges produced by publishers and others for special promotions or book events. This month we have Piccolo's Guess What badge which promotes The Guinness Book of Animal Marvels, 75p, and The Guinness Book of Most and Least, 75p. Each badge costs 10p (includes p & p). Still available are our own Books for Keeps badges, price 10p each (includes p & p).



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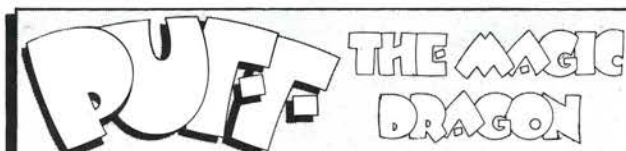
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These are proving to be extraordinarily popular as an easy way to brighten up and create lively, colourful book atmospheres in book corners, libraries and school bookshops. We have two packs, one for primary, the other for secondary schools, made up of about ten publishers' posters. We charge 60p each which covers postage and an OAP's time in folding and packing. You could of course write to a dozen or so publishers and get your publicity free but when you add up the cost of stamps and bear in mind that you may or may not get suitable posters, it's probably easier, quicker and cheaper to write for our packs.

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Lived by the sea, and frolicked in the autumn mist in a land called Honah Lee...



95p Available now.

Now the song well-loved by children everywhere is available as a full-colour story book from Magnet.

Verses of the song run through the book, and the words and music of two new songs are included in the back. The full-colour pictures are taken from the popular TV film.

Results of the Piccolo Olympics Competition

It was tremendous to receive so many entries for the Piccolo Olympics Competition. Some schools were so enthusiastic they even went to the trouble of producing their own duplicated entry forms. Here are the names of the winners who will by now have received their prize — a copy of Piccolo's Olympics 1980:

Ian Gray, Teresa Jeffries and Kerry Wood, all of Bristol; Jane Bateman, Neil Cushing, Jason Maslen, Jane Nichols and Shane Wesson, all of Kingsfield School, Bristol; James Clark, Mark Gilder and Spencer Harlow, all of Great Yarmouth; Samantha Croft, Lee Trimby, Kim Walton and Robert Wing, all of Wecock Middle School, Portsmouth; Michelle Bates, Tracy Carless, Johanna Gresty, Paul Hill, Gillian Patterson, Amanda Shore and Joanne Thompson, all of Ridgeway Junior School, Walsall.



BOOKWORM



Bookworm for Bookworms

Children in schools in the north-west have been enjoying their own magazine about books for over a year now. It comes out three times a year and contains an author-interview, crossword, tasters of books, reviews from children and lots of lively illustrations. We think it's rather good.

If you'd like a sample copy to see if you'd like to order more of the autumn issue to sell to children, write to Eunice McMullen (she's the book-mad teacher who produces it) at Howarth Cross Middle School, Albert Royds Street, Rochdale, Lancashire. Please enclose 25p to cover the cost of the magazine and postage.