

BOOKS FOR KEEPS

the children's book magazine

NOVEMBER 1988 No. 53
UK Price £1.20



- STORYTELLING •
- BABETTE COLE •
- SANTA'S SACK •

POETRY 0-16

MORAG STYLES / PAT TRIGGS

A BFK Guide

ISBN: 1 871566 00 2

Price: £5.50

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Poetry: 0-16 is a major information resource for teachers, librarians and parents wanting to introduce children to poetry. It contains a large, fully annotated

bibliography divided into helpful sections by age range, type of book, genre and/or theme, and ranging from the Oral Tradition to GCSE. Sprinkled throughout are over a dozen short poet portraits. The other major part of the Guide is what we have called Poetry in Practice consisting of several feature articles looking at ways in which poetry can be used in the classroom; included are suggestions for a DIY In-Service Baker Day and ideas on creating a more poetic classroom. The whole is topped and tailed by an overview of the state of children's poetry in the main Introduction and by an Information and Index section at the end.



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Cover Story

The illustration on our cover is taken from **King Change-a-lot**, written and illustrated by Babette Cole and published by Hamish Hamilton (0 241 12491 3, £6.95).

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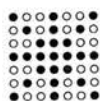
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EDITOR'S PAGE



According to the old adage 'three times makes it true'. Since this is my third stint fronting **Books for Keeps**, who knows? Maybe, like Pinocchio, I'll turn into a *real* boy/Editor with this one . . . literate, decisive, a wizard at design and layout, etcetera. Pause for hollow laughter from the GBfK Hback-up team. Ah, well . . . we can all dream. At least it's been a lot of fun once again.

Storytelling

And at least Liz Weir, who contributes our leading article on page 4, will agree with the 'three-times-makes-it-true' formula. Her endorsement of storytelling — no, not reading, *telling* — is as crucial as a Lenny Henry suit, it seems to me. Behind all literature, however highly developed, lie the jokes, gossip and anecdotes we improvise for each other in our everyday lives, so the work of the Belfast librarians in promoting this aspect of *talk* is also preparing for, or reinforcing, a love of books. And you wouldn't be reading one now if you didn't agree with that. I was much struck, too, by a remark from the storyteller Linda Williamson which we also quote: 'Social unity is generated by the very act of traditional storytelling, with the teller's art gaining strength of transmission by the feedback of the listener.' Maybe Liz Weir's Northern Ireland storytellers are spreading the word on other issues, too.

Bubbly Babette

Not that words are the only medium for telling stories — as our front cover testifies. This issue's Authorgraph features an illustrator with an eloquence all her own that's as much to do with the line she draws as the line she spins: Babette Cole. Few of our subjects in the past have made such an impact on our investigators. Stephanie Nettell returned from the interview thoroughly mind-blown. 'Now I've got to sort out the stories I can use from the stories I can't,' she gasped. Babette, apparently, is a wonderful gossip as well as a superb producer of picture books. Our photographer, Richard Mewton, was similarly enchanted. He could have gone on photographing all day, it seems. And very nearly did. Turn to our centre pages to catch the full flavour of Babette — for whom the words 'zany', 'wacky' and 'off-the-wall' might have been invented. They're qualities she injects into her books with a flair relished by her young fans (not to mention plenty of older ones).

Projects and Topics

To sober you up, or at any rate bring a change of pace, you might turn next to pages 19-21 where Pat Thomson continues her 'Lifeline' series. We've been receiving much approving comment about Pat's annotated, not to say animated, bibliography for Project and Topic work. This article takes on 'Clothing'. Before you read it, jot down the books on the subject that occur to you. Then turn to Pat's list. If you're like me, the most revealing, perhaps depressing, difference between her suggestions and the ones I came up with is not the books she knows that I didn't . . . it's the books I *did* know but had completely forgotten. Oh, well. That's what experts are for.

No More of the Other

Some people, let it be said, have expertise thrust upon them. To some extent this was the case with Rosemary Stones who writes on page 22. It's hard to think of anyone who's done more over the last decade or so to make books fit for *today's* children not the children adults feel safest with, i.e. those of yesterday (who always turn out to be uncannily like themselves). Rosemary's pioneering work alongside, amongst others, her husband

Andrew Mann, has done much to combat the dreaded 'isms' of race, sex and class which we now take for granted are vicious. But ten years ago this was by no means self-evident. Through her books, articles, the magazine **Children's Book Bulletin**, and regular appearances on radio and television, Rosemary strove to get her message across . . . also by way of **The Other Award** now defunct for reasons she explains. Children everywhere have a lot to thank her for.

Alice

Would we have had Anthony Browne's **Piggybook**, for instance, without the efforts of people like Rosemary? Of course, it also took a little effort from Anthony Browne who has just won this year's Emil Award for his version of **Alice's Adventures in Wonderland**. See page 23 for our report on a sensationally good book. What will he do next, we wonder? **Through the Looking-Glass? The Wizard of Oz? Pinocchio? Animal Farm?** All these have been mentioned as possibilities by his publisher Julia MacRae. What's certain is that his next project, whatever it is, will now have to be more sensational still to top **Alice**. But I wouldn't bet against him succeeding.

Poetry: 0-16

So far as I know, Anthony Browne hasn't tackled poetry yet — for some, the ultimate test of an illustrator. Poetry, did I say? Funny I should mention that . . . because available now is **Poetry: 0-16**, our latest **BfK** Guide. Were I a proper Editor I'd pass over this modestly, of course, with a mere passing reference to the work of Morag Styles, Pat Triggs and the **BfK** team. But since I'm not, and since I had nothing whatever to do with the project, I'll be frank: it's *wonderful*. If there's a better introduction to the verse currently available, its writers, its promotion and its importance, then I'm . . . well, a poet:

*The latest Guide from BfK
Now glitters in the light of day.
For theory, facts, ideas and smiles
Put all your trust in Triggs and Styles.
And just in case you must be thrifty
Its price is only five pounds fifty.*

. . . and, as you can see, a poet I'm *not*. I do know A Good Thing when I see one, though, and so will you when you clap eyes on **Poetry: 0-16**. No-one serious about bringing kids and verse together should miss it.

Christmas

Oh, yes . . . Christmas. I thought the Goose had been putting on a little weight lately. **Sound and Vision**, pages 24-25, includes Julia Eccleshare's report on this year's seasonal **Beeb Biggie** — Paul Stone's TV version of **The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe**. And on pages 27-30 you'll find **BfK's** Christmas present to the children of Booth Hall Children's Hospital, Manchester, chosen with a little help from John Agard, Bernard Ashley, Quentin Blake, Anthony Browne, Shirley Hughes, Dick King-Smith, Robert Leeson, Philippa Pearce and Michael Rosen. It's a game you might like to play on 26th December which, as a child, I used to call **Books-In Day** because I was so eager to start on my Christmas-gift reading. You know the feeling, I'm sure. And, like me, I don't suppose you've changed all that much, at least in this respect.

Have a wonderful holiday and the happiest, and most book-ish, of New Years!

Chris ●

STORYTELLING FOR ALL

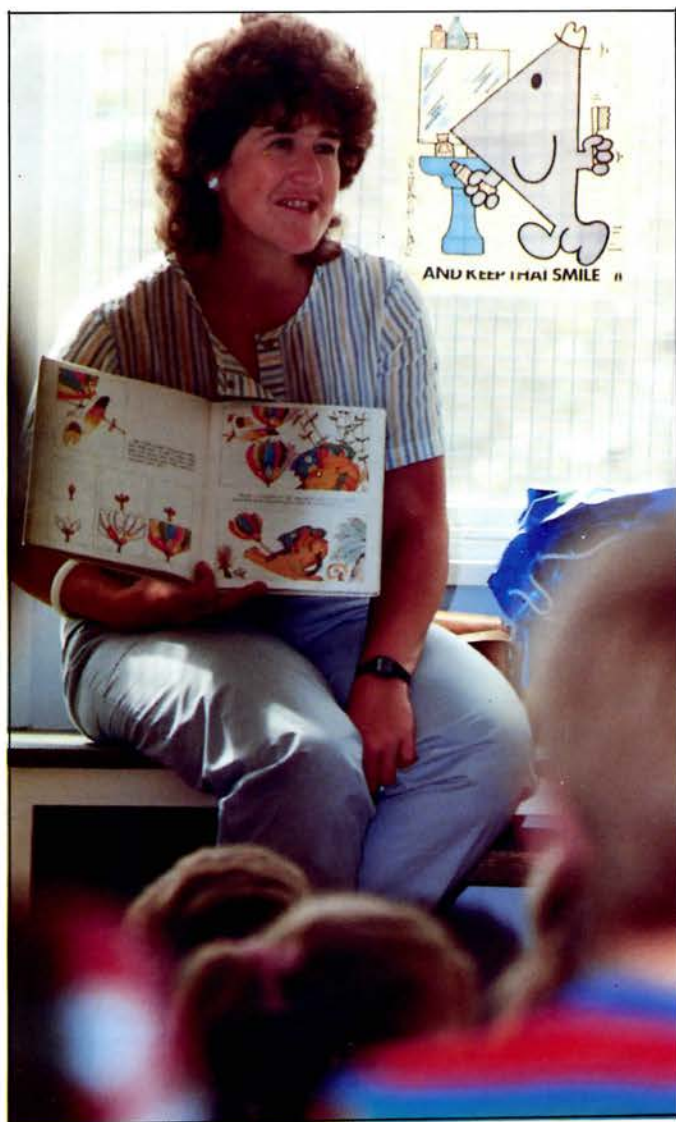
Belfast librarian, **Liz Weir**, reflects on the power of story and its place on her home patch

'A story told by a person is often more powerful, exciting and inspiring than one read from a book. The performer is able to highlight areas of interest with their eyes, expressions and gestures, making it a lasting and a memorable occasion.'

Usha Bahl

'In storytelling there is always a *moral* aspect. It is the moral that the audience waits for. Children learn about heroes and heroines. They learn about beliefs. And they learn about right and wrong.'

Amoafi Kwapong



Storytelling is about *sharing* – not just the sharing of words and emotions, but the direct coming together of the teller and the listener, whether that takes place on a one-to-one or in a group situation. We are *all* storytellers, even if some of us are reluctant to 'perform' in public – we tell stories quite naturally as part of our everyday lives. For proof of this we need look no further than snatches of conversations overheard in the school corridor, the staff room or, better still, on a bus (the latter being the most tantalising experience since a bus-stop often looms before the denouement is reached!).

For those of us who work with children, sharing stories is a *privilege* – to watch a gang of street-wise ten-year-olds still capable of open-mouthed suspense at a ghost story is an uplifting experience. But this is much more than an ego trip for the storyteller – it reflects the staunch defence of the case for the preservation of the oral tradition.

Storytelling enables children to learn to listen in an age when many are lacking in concentration skills. And if they're telling the stories themselves, it gives them the opportunity to express emotion and use their imaginations with a freedom no other medium can offer.

With Toddlers

Telling stories to children too young to read for themselves has long been accepted. Much has been written about the importance of this early contact, the need to promote language development in the pre-school years, to foster a life-long interest in books. But these early experiences mustn't be left to wither. Storytelling has still a place and, I would argue, continues to have a place throughout our lives. There's quite a commonly held view, for instance, that it's a bit pointless to tell stories or share picture books with a child who can read for herself. It's my contention that teacher and pupils are brought much closer together through exchanging stories; this very sharing with which I began.

With Minority Groups

If storytelling can bring individuals together, it can also bring together groups within our society. Physically handicapped and able bodied children can all share the thrill of an exciting yarn. The intellectually impaired child can delight in joining in, even if her reactions are slightly slower than the rest. Through stories we can all experience the rich variety of human experience from the aboriginal 'dreamtime' to inner city decay. Stories can promote a sense of tolerance between religious or racial groupings – mother tongue storytelling can at the same time preserve a cultural identity. Stories linger on in the memory long after the teller has moved on. Imagine receiving this unexpected greeting from an 18-year-old skin

'Tales can link us with people thousands of years ago, people who felt as we feel, and to their many different cultures. They speak to our feelings in an unforgettable way and help us to respect the great moments of life such as birth, youth, love, marriage, age, harmony and death, and they warn us against disrespect and disobedience for these life forces.'

Margaret Leona



'There is a magic number in the telling of stories. To be "real", a story must have a beginning, a middle and an end. The three basic rules for telling it well are:

1. Know your story sufficiently well to tell it fluently.
2. Think it is a good story – not only for your audience but for you yourself.
3. Enjoy telling it!

The late H E Todd



'Social unity is generated by the very act of traditional storytelling, with the teller's art gaining strength of transmission by the feedback of the listener.'

Linda Williamson

Quotations throughout the article are taken from the 1988 List of Storytellers available from the National Community Folktale Centre, Middlesex Polytechnic, All Saints, White Hart Lane, London N17 8HR (tel: 01-801 3434, ext. 6332).

head: 'Hey, Missus, are you the woman from the library that told us about the five wee Chinese men?' (Who could deny it?)

With Parents

Storytelling is a terrific way to bring parents and children closer – family storytelling sessions held in libraries in the evening have attracted excellent support and not just in 'yuppie' areas. We must all remember that many parents have no real experience of the oral tradition – often it will be the grannies who will remember the traditional playground chants and skipping rhymes. These family sessions help mothers and fathers relax and enjoy the experience with their children – sharing once again.

Belfast Tales

In Belfast the public library service provides a citywide summer storytelling programme with temporary storytellers and library staff performing up to 50 sessions a week. Venues include leisure centres, parks, hospital wards and community halls, sometimes visiting places where only the brave survive. Not exactly idyllic conditions, but the response from children and community leaders is warm and friendly and visits are often heralded by choruses of 'The storytellers are coming!' Storytelling is firmly established as an integral part of summer activities in the city, and the age range at sessions is best demonstrated by one centre where the youngest listener was three and the oldest, Granny Logan, was 90 – stories bridge the age gap as well. Volunteers now tell stories in a geriatric unit and monthly adult 'Yarn Spinning' sessions at the Linen Hall Library are attended by audiences of 100-plus with an age range from teenagers to pensioners.

The Rise of the Storyteller

Visits to Belfast by several American storytellers, keen to participate, remind us that in the United States storytelling has a much higher profile, with the National Storytelling Festival attracting visitors by the thousand. But the revival is well under way in the British Isles – the National Community Folktale Centre's 1988 list of storytellers shows just how many people are now performing in the UK and more storytelling festivals are planned. In the past the storyteller was a well respected visitor and the true value of storytelling was perhaps more widely perceived. Today those of us who truly believe in the power of storytelling must set about making sure that this message is spread. It is hard to quantify the value of storytelling in this age of 'output measurement' but day by day observation of children's response to stories confirms my belief that we all need to keep promoting the art.

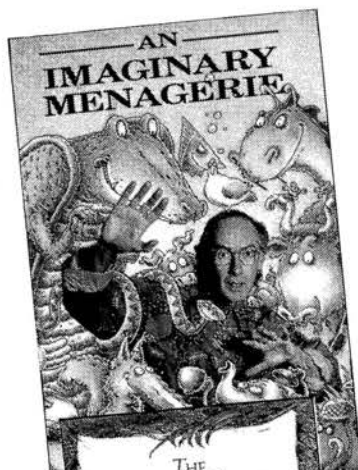
Storytelling for All

Yes, *all* of us are storytellers but we don't all have to be world beaters – it isn't a competition. Just tell stories which you enjoy, support others who tell stories, organise an 'event' locally. Encourage children to tell their own stories or retell favourites for their peers. Everyone has a role to play, but lest we all take ourselves too seriously I must add a cautionary footnote. There is a little known condition called 'storytelleritis' which is always omitted from storytelling textbooks. This affliction is likely to strike after concentrated periods of storytelling and children's librarians are in a high risk category. The symptoms are that the sufferer talks in phrases taken from well known stories such as 'just awful' (from the story of the same name), 'truly enormous and dreadful to behold' ('Little Boy's Secret') and 'get 'em, I'll pay good gold' ('Jim and the Beanstalk'). The only cure is to have de-programming sessions with questions such as 'How many hot water bottles had Phoebe?' (157) or 'Name the wild Washerwomen' (Lottie, Dottie, Molly, Dolly, Winnie, Minnie and Ernestine).

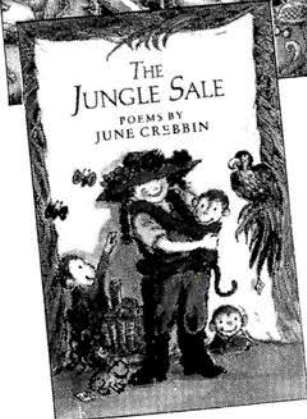
Take care – but spread the word! ●

Liz Weir is Children's Librarian for the Belfast Education and Library Board.

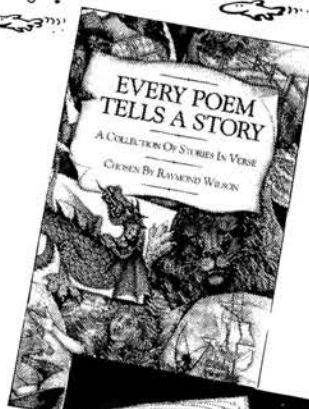
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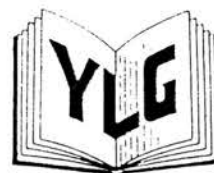
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Sex Education: a guide to evaluation of materials
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REVIEWS

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

Nursery/Infant

Come and Tell Me

Helen Hollick, ill. Jane Cope, Dinosaur Talk It Over, 0 85122 660 4, £1.75

I very seldom like books that are written to carry a worthy message; it is usually the death-knell for quality and entertainment. Raise three cheers for this book, though. It's a 'Don't go with strangers' book but *at last* tells the message in the simplest, safest and least upsetting way possible. I have been worried by the 'Stranger Danger' campaign which has been going the rounds for some time. It worries me for two reasons. Firstly because we know that most often danger to children comes not from strangers at all but from people known to the child and a simplistic slogan such as 'Stranger Danger' does not cover that eventuality at all. Secondly, there may be times when a child's life and safety depends on her willingness to approach and trust strangers; after an accident, for example, or if lost or in hospital. 'Stranger Danger' leaves a child with the impression that there is no-one she can trust.

There is a perfectly simple answer to this, however, and it is one that can be explained to even the youngest children and which will be quite easily remembered and understood by them. It doesn't destroy trust or frighten or oversimplify. We just tell children, 'Before you go anywhere with anyone, friend or stranger, ask mummy first.'

As the introduction to this book says, 'If children will come and tell, they do not have to judge friend from enemy... they can simply be told that genuinely friendly people will always approve of their going and telling.'



Come and Tell is the story of Jenny and her mum and begins with the familiar situation of the child who has gone to play at her friend Darren's house without telling

mum. From this base it puts over the message clearly and well. Children from four were quite clear what the story was about and what it told them. 'Tell mummy else she'll worry' as Rachael summed it up. Very worthwhile and valuable, and every infant should have this read to them regularly. LW

Finding Robin Redbreast

Harriet Ziefert and Mavis Smith, Picture Lions, 0 00 663002 2, £2.95

A very pleasant, chummy story about Kate and her daddy going birdwatching and looking out for a robin. There is a different bird on each page, with a flap to lift and find out which kind it is. The idea is a good one and will be fun to use (sturdy too, although with reservation at nursery or playgroup), teaching children to search the page for detail, anticipate what they may find and then see if it is what they are looking for, which at the end of course it is.



Probably I will be accused of being too fussy, but I do think it is a pity that the final picture of the robin doesn't look real. The ones I know and love have brown feathers; unfortunately this one has grey! MS

Tumble Tots

0 416 00992 1, £2.50

Starting School

0 416 10302 2, £1.95

Fiona Pragoff, Magnet

The first of these two books didn't impress me greatly. It is simply a prolonged advertisement for the Tumble Tots exercise classes and, since we don't have one locally, it didn't have many things our children could relate to. (If we did have a class locally, I'd have still been

reluctant to appear to be advertising it.) The photos are lovely, though, and a change from drawings for this age group.

The second book **Starting School** is a follow-up to Fiona Pragoff's excellent **I go to Nursery School** and uses the same format of clear, interesting photos of everyday school life combined with a rather deadpan text. **Starting School** would be a good book to read to playgroup/nursery/reception children to lead to discussion about 'big school'; there is nothing here to disturb so none of the caution **Frankie's First Day** might need! A little more humour might have been welcome in this one; however it is reassuring and realistic and small children will find lots of interest in it. Even if they are not as lucky as Lucy - in a class of only 22! LW

Look Out Sally on the Farm

0 356 16112 9

Look Out Katy in the Town

0 356 16110 2

Look Out Tim in the Park

0 356 16113 7

Look Out Maz in the Jungle

0 356 16111 0

Charlotte Mann and Stephanie Ryder, Macdonald, £1.50 each

The storyline in each of these four books is identical: a baby animal - duckling, kitten, puppy and chimp - wanders off and has a series of narrow escapes from danger or trouble. But this potentially exciting idea is rendered dull and boring. The true-to-life pictures, though well executed individually, do not develop or carry the story forward and the short present-tense text is almost interchangeable between the four titles. Children of four to five would be able to tell a far more exciting story for themselves. Surely we ought to have moved on from here by now? JB

Truffles' Day in Bed

Catherine Anholt, Magnet, 0 416 10372 3, £1.95

A so-so story about a young pig who wakes up with spots. The doctor is called and she gives Truffles some medicine

which father has trouble persuading him to take. Medicine apart, Truffles finds being ill isn't so bad when everyone tries hard to keep you amused with games and stories and father discovers just how 'Yuk' the medicine is. No doubt older infants will enjoy father's discomfiture and the slightly quirky naive illustrations, though they may be left wondering like me, why pigs? JB

Elizabeth Jane Gets Dressed

Anne Tyrrell, ill. Caroline Castle, Magnet, 0 416 08782 5, £1.95

An exploration of some of 'practically three' Elizabeth Jane's wardrobe through the week as she struggles with the difficulties of dressing herself. The story is told by mum with a sometimes uneasy rhyming text which might trip up adult readers-aloud. Listeners of three to five will find the pictures highly diverting, particularly if they are allowed to explore the book themselves and chuckle over the mistakes and tangles and the way Elizabeth Jane's teddy, whose wardrobe is identical, mimics her every move. JB

Owl and Billy

Martin Waddell, Magnet, 0 416 10362 6, £1.75

Billy is a week too young to start school on the first day of term and the wait is a boring prospect until the arrival of the 'Spaceman' to live in his street. The book contains seven episodes leading up to Billy's first day at school, told in a simple straightforward way most appropriate for reading aloud to those of around Billy's age (four to five) rather than for older solo readers who may well find Billy's adventures and the manner of telling, too young to hold their interest. JB

Granpa

John Burningham, Picture Puffins, 0 14 050.841 1, £2.25

John Burningham's classic picture book recounting a little girl's relationship with her grandfather is chronicled in sensitive little vignettes of their daily life. The empty chair and the woebegone, pinched little face of the girl at the end allow the emotions of loss and mourning to have expression. There are too few books that treat death and

grief in a way which allow the young child to come to some sort of understanding of the validity of his or her feelings. Thank goodness for this one.

JS



The Harbour

0 7445 0979 3

The Airport

0 7445 0938 6

The Railway Station

0 7445 0977 7

Philippe Dupasquier, Walker 'Busy Places' series, £1.99 each

Before term began these books had to be wrested out of my four-year-old next door neighbour's tightly clenched fists and, since then, have scarcely touched the shelves, being passed from hand to hand throughout the Infants!

The series depicts the changes that occur during the day in exactly the same part of each of the stock locations. The build-up and gradual easing of the activity with the reassuring return to the familiar characters of the early morning, the gentle humour as well as the slapstick and, above all, Philippe Dupasquier's acute eye for the absurd all contribute to the charm of these books. The changes that occur within the carefully constructed illustrations give so much scope for re-examination and promote so many exciting possibilities for discussion that my children have concocted fascinating scenarios around often apparently minor characters and incidents.

These books are a must for any Infant classroom and would make a great gift for any four to six-year-old.

JS

Frankie's First Day

Gordon Lingard, ill. Martin Wright, Beaver, 0 09 957370 9, £2.25

We did enjoy this book! It makes a refreshing change from all the worthy 'First Day at School' books which aim to give a realistic and reassuring picture of reception classes. This one is totally different and probably should only be read by infants who are old hands and can appreciate the humour. It's strong stuff for any four-year-old worried about the first day!



Frankie cries on his first day. He cries and cries. His teacher starts off kindly and sympathetic and ends up exasperated and furious. ("Stop that!" said the teacher. Very realistic, this.) Frankie ends up flooding the classroom, providing a swimming pool for the class, nearly drowning the headteacher and the school. This entertains him so much, he finally decides he likes school after all.

It is very funny and really caught the imagination of my 6-7 year olds - but don't read it to the receptions until at least half-term!

LW

I'm Having a Bath with Papa

Shigeo Watanabe, ill. Yasuo Ohtomo, Picture Puffins, 0 14 050.734 5, £1.95

Another simple tale about Little Bear, this time having a bath with his father. The tenth story in the series and, like the others, it works well. Small children learning about their immediate environment will identify with Little Bear and his family, and enjoy the clear pictures, the simple plot and the happy conclusion when the bathed father and son have supper together. Definitely a winner.

MS

Pumpkin Pumpkin

Jeanne Titherington, Picture Piper, 0 330 30093 8, £2.50

The illustrations thoroughly compliment the story of Jamie who grows a pumpkin. It's just the sort of book I've been searching for because it takes the reader carefully through the stages of growth, showing both the detail and the increasing delight experienced by Jamie as the pumpkin grows and grows. There's a different animal to talk about on each new page too and at the end a lovely big pumpkin face... and even better, more seeds for next year. For those who wish to help children to understand the real natural world, this book is a gem and I can't recommend it enough.

MS

Eating Out

0 7445 0988 2

The Drive

0 7445 0985 8

The Dancing Class

0 7445 0949 1

Helen Oxenbury, Walker, £1.50 each

Three stories about life with small children. I liked **The Dancing Class** best. It manages to be funny and true but doesn't make a fool of the child, and actually tells about

the dancing class, the other children and the teacher. It's a good story to make mums and dads laugh too, which can't be bad. However I have to say that the other two didn't appeal to me as much. Maybe it's because I don't wish to be reminded of sick in the back of the car or a restless child in a restaurant... in fact, that's definitely it!

MS

Winston's Ice Cream Caper

Andrew Martyr and Paula Lawford, Picture Corgi, 0 552 52462 X, £2.25

Winston's zany adventures as he attempts to get to the beach to sell ice creams defy description; suffice it to say that they involve just missing a chicken, borrowing a car with brakes that fail, squelching along the sea-bed to the disgust of its occupants only to emerge triumphantly from the waves and, with commendable aplomb, proceed to sell ice creams! The kids loved it.

JS

Here Comes a Bus

Harriet Ziefert, ill. Richard Brown, Picture Lions, 0 00 663064 2, £2.95

Encouraging children to anticipate and find out is something we always hope to do and here is a book which does just that. Two children, Mum and baby wait for their bus and wonder on every page if this will be the one... over the page and lift the flap... and the bus is full of animals... no, this is not the bus for us. So there comes a bus full of animals, then one full of fish, the next full of zoo animals, and the next with skeletons for the Natural History Museum... and finally the bus for the children.

I do think flap books are overrated although this one is fun, but they really do not have a long life even if used properly. However I like the idea of this one because it helps with sorting and categorising, and happily the right bus comes along eventually!

MS



featuring Simon and his zany witch friend. Here she decides to take over Simon's school, start a new hobby and do a turn at baby-sitting, all with inevitably outrageous and hilarious results. Well up to the standard of previous volumes and great fun for sharing and for solo reading.

JB

Infant/Junior

Katie Morag and the Two Grandmothers

Mairi Hedderwick, Picture Lions, 0 00 662579 7, £1.95

Katie Morag is already a favourite character with many infants so it is great to see this book in paperback at last. Grannie Island's jealousy of the glamorous Gramma Mainland will bring a gleam of understanding to many an infant eye. To make matters worse the aging Alecina, Grannie Island's prize ewe, looks set to lose her crown at



the Island Show and so poor Grannie Island seems doomed to double misery. Katie Morag comes to the rescue armed with some of Gramma Mainland's beauty treatments and all ends happily in a comfortable way which never fails to leave smiling faces and satisfied nods from all who share this story.

JS

The Witch V.I.P.

Margaret Stuart Barry, Young Lions, 0 00 672987 8, £1.75

The fifth collection of stories

Stone Soup

Tony Ross, Beaver
Picture Book,
0 09 951720 5, £2.50

Another successful reworking of an old folk tale by Tony Ross. His distinctive illustrations take on a frenetic quality as the wily hen frantically thinks of ploy after ploy to postpone getting eaten by the wolf and yet still manages to get him to do her housework! JS

The Knights of Hawthorn Crescent

Jenny Koralek, ill. John Lawrence, Magnet,
0 416 10382 0, £1.75

An appealing blend of fantasy and reality when a gang of party revellers gets transported into the King Arthur and Merlin stories. The tale proceeds at a breathless pace: it would have been good to have a slower unfolding which didn't take knowledge of the Arthurian stories for granted! That said, there's imaginative action, and the writer has an involving voice which makes this a possible read for bookwise nine to elevens. CM

Harry's Aunt/Harry's Horse

Sheila Lavelle, ill.
Jo Davies, 0 330 30388 0

**King Henry's Palace/
The Tale of Thomas Mead**

Pat Hutchins,
0 330 30389 9

**How Tom Beat Captain Najork and his Hired Sportsmen/
A Near Thing for Captain Najork**

Russell Hoban, ill.
Quentin Blake,
0 330 30261 2
Young Piper Flippers,
£1.50 each

An innovative new format from Young Piper. Two books in one: read the first, then 'flip' over and read the second. It's certainly good value for money and, though it takes away the individual feel of a

book, the format has proved popular with children I've shared this first batch with.

Lavelle's two 'Harry' stories are particularly well suited to the format. In each, we meet the spirited hero and his spell-working aunt. This writer always has a keen ear for the pace of dialogue, and keeps a tale going with verve. The mayhem at the pet show in *Harry's Aunt* is splendidly caught by writer and artist. The grown-ups' collusion in *Harry's Horse* is endearing.

I've longed to see **Thomas Mead** in paperback for years. It's the tale I read a lot with children, and their teachers, to get them thinking about *why* we learn to read . . .

There was a boy called Thomas Mead/who never ever learned to read./ 'I wish you would!' his teacher sighed./ 'Why should I?' Thomas Mead replied.

Fives up to elevens love the cartoons, and the way in which poor Tom, jailed as a result of the misadventures which result from his illiteracy, learns to read when his fellow cons show him a *purpose!* He's on *War and Peace* by the end: Hutchins at her very best. The flipped pairing here is a couple of **King Henry** stories – witty, cumulative tales, popular with fives to sevens. The fact that **Thomas Mead** is popular with readers up to twelve, and **King Henry** with younger children, may make for a mismatch in the pairing – but this one is still a must for classroom and bookshop.

Least satisfying in the format is the Hoban and Blake pair. Good as it is to have the two now-classic Pythonesque picture stories in paperback, they are sadly cramped in the edition here. Hoban's tale is to do with excess; Blake's pictures need expansiveness – they are not served well here. CM

Our Mammoth

Adrian Mitchell and Priscilla Lamont,
Walker, 0 7445 0931 9,
£1.99

The Gumble twins' – Bing (boy) and Saturday (girl) – trip to the sea throws up more than the usual seashore flotsam. To find an iceberg is amazing but an iceberg containing a mammoth, well! The words themselves appear deceptively simple to read but the text has an interesting structure with the storytelling alternating between the twins and the third person. Adrian Mitchell's choice of language – 'we were as scared as skittles . . . Our legs wanted to run away but our heads wanted to stay' – makes it a delight to read. The natural history is accurate but the lessons unforced and Priscilla Lamont's watery style pictures make them all the more enjoyable to learn. Highly recommended for solo readers of six to eight. JB

Fancy Nancy

Ruth Craft, Young
Lions, 0 00 673045 0,
£1.75



Nancy is about the same age as Billy in *Owl and Billy* (see *Nursery/Infant*); but she's a much more lively character and her adventures are told in such a way that solo readers as young listeners will enjoy her activities – getting lost on a train for instance. It is interesting to compare the manner of telling and characterisation in these two books. *Fancy Nancy* emerges a real spirited miss whereas Billy seems to lack the depth of character needed to bring him to life. JB

Charlie, Emma and Dragons to the Rescue

Margaret Greaves,
Magnet, 0 416 10292 1,
£1.75

This is the fourth story about Charlie and Emma and their unusual friend. Here the prospect of a boring holiday is quickly transformed by the discovery of an injured dog. How will they earn the money to keep and care for him? Well, of course, this is where the dragons come in. Those who enjoyed previous adventures should be pleased with this one too, be they solo readers of around seven or younger listeners. JB

The Worm and the Toffee-Nosed Princess

Eva Ibbotson, ill.
Margaret Chamberlain,
Young Piper,
0 330 29500 4, £1.75

There are five stories in this book, all about monsters of one sort or another and all not to be taken seriously. The title story is of a huge worm who swallows an obnoxious princess. She is rescued, reluctantly, by an elderly knight who refuses to marry such a horrid person and therefore lives a very lonely life. Meanwhile, the worm, having been chopped up by the knight, spends a long time joining himself together, gets his head in the middle by mistake, likes it and lives happily ever after.

Not the usual sort of monster story and nor are the rest. They are just right for children, ready for longer books but not

for novel format, who like silly stories. I enjoyed them, too! LW

Meal One

Ivor Cutler, ill. Helen Oxenbury, Picture
Lions, 0 00 662882 6,
£1.95

A book for all eccentrics. An eccentric story of a boy and his mum and the plum tree that grows through his bed with its roots in the kitchen eating the breakfast. Eccentric pictures, with Helen Oxenbury at her most flamboyant, match the text beautifully and are worth the price of the book on their own.



A fair amount of sophistication needed for this one. I think: the language is complex because rather florid and unexpected, and the playing with time which ends the book needs some concept of time, cause and effect, but it is very rewarding with a refreshing sideways look at all sorts of everyday things. LW

Robert the Great

Philippe Dupasquier,
Walker, 0 7445 1061 9,
£1.99

I'm a great fan of **Robert the Great** and so are the children so we were very pleased to see it in paperback. The entertaining tale of how Robert, furious at being called a lovely *little* boy by everyone, tries to make himself bigger but finally becomes a hero just because he *is* small (and so can slip through the bars of the tiger's cage), is a great favourite, especially with boys. It is easy to read, whether the reader is an adult or a newly independent child, because the language is natural, the story flows so well, and the pictures are amusing and full of incident and action. Well worth adding to the 6-7 year old library. LW

The Night of the Paper Bag Monsters

Helen Craig, Walker,
0 7445 0940 8, £2.50

Susie and Alfred are two little pigs – although there seems no reason why they should be; their behaviour, homes and conversation could just as well belong to hamsters, elephants or, indeed, ordinary children. The story suffers a little from this lack of character identity,

I think, but it does have some moments.

The plot concerns Susie and Alfred's attempts to make monster costumes for the Hallowe'en party. They quarrel, in a rather refined way ("Oh, you beast!" cried Susie), and each goes home to work independently, finally producing wonderful costumes and making up the quarrel at the party.

The pictures are lively and detailed and there is a nice joke about 'the little person who came third' in the fancy dress. He is patently a real monster! LW

The Amazing Pet

Marjorie Newman, ill.
Elaine MacGregor
Turney, Young Corgi,
0 552 52469 7, £1.75

A lovely story, well written and sensitively illustrated, about an ordinary boy in a family of gifted people. His search for something which will allow him to shine involves courage and perseverance but his subsequent success is all the sweeter. Such a shame about the cheap quality of the paper which spoils the overall 'feel' of a good book. JS

Beyond the Firelight and other stories of hobgoblins

Ann Lawrence, ill. Gail Lewton, Young Piper,
0 330 29499 7, £1.99

Rainbow Tales

Alison Uttley, chosen by Kathleen Lines, ill. Shirley Hughes, Young Piper, 0 330 30379 1, £1.99

Hamish and the Wee Witch

Moirra Miller, ill. Mairi Hedderwick, Magnet,
0 416 11932 8, £1.75

Three delightful read-aloud collections. Ann Lawrence's four stories reveal an involving and immediate voice, able to summon up hobgoblins, boggarts and other strange creatures out of ordinary domestic settings. Look closely at the simple-seeming beginnings of these tales to see how rumbling secrets lie just beneath the words on the page. My favourite, 'Only Me', haunted me for days and got the seven-year-olds I shared it with talking about the ways in which we switch what we see to fit what we

think we *should* see. Evocative pictures, too – though I'll keep my hardback (*A Flying Carpet*, Macmillan 1983) to catch the power of the original. Good addition to the the lively Piper list.

Next, there's *Rainbow Tales*, a skilfully edited sample of 11 of Uttley's magical retellings and original tales. The sources are varied and will, I hope, send both teachers and children off to Uttley's collections like *Moonshine and Magic*, *Mustard, Pepper and Salt*. In these days of assessment targets and a concern with the easily 'measurable' in language, I desperately want all sixes to nines to be in touch with the richness of these tellings. Gems, for me, are 'John Barleycorn' and 'Star Shine'. The gifted editor's foreword is generous and informative about the kind of freewheeling childhood that was the genesis of these tales. Splendid pictures.

Moirra Miller gives us six tales involving two children, Hamish and Mirren, who live near a loch. The Scottish landscape infuses each of the stories. The writer's ability to paint pictures with words will captivate:

'The wind played a mad dance in the trees around

Hamish's farmhouse and whistled down the chimney into the fireplace so that the flames flickered and jumped unevenly round the bottom of the iron kettle.'

A beautifully crafted book with imaginative cover and illustrations.

Each of these three will be valuable additions to collections for sixes up to nines. CM

The Last Slice of the Rainbow

Joan Aiken, Puffin,
0 14 03.2301 5, £2.50

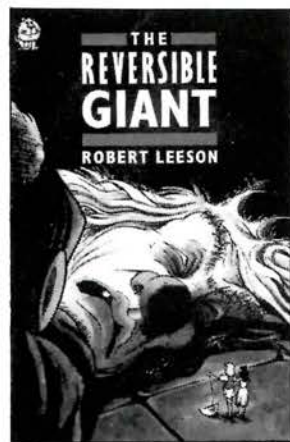
A collection of Joan Aiken's splendid stories is always a welcome addition to home or school libraries. However, a word of caution to prospective purchasers of this 'new' set. There are nine stories in all, but three of these were anthologised between 1977 and 1982, while the whole collection was first published by Cape in 1985. So a few minutes spent checking the contents list in the bookshop may prevent disappointment when you get home. The theme of fantasy links the collection and the Aiken narrative magic is evident throughout. BB

Junior/Middle

The Reversible Giant

Robert Leeson, ill.
Chris Smedley, Young Lions, 0 00 672893 6,
£1.75

When a writer as resourceful as Leeson gets to work on a traditional tale, we know eights to elevens are in for a treat. In his unfolding of how Robin, the poor kitchen boy, calms the dragon to win the hand of the princess, there's vigour, fun and a good ear for the demotic.



The slaying of the dragon is all done with mirrors; the princess is too haughty for our hero who prefers the blacksmith's daughter anyway. Leeson's writing is fast-moving, televisual. The whole is a reading lesson in how forms can be played with and revelled in. Superb. CM

The Blossoms Meet the Vulture Lady

Betsy Byars, Piper,
0 330 29975 1, £1.99

Is it really 18 years since *The Midnight Fox* first awoke us to the talent of Betsy Byars? Her tight, economical, businesslike style has become much-copied in the interim... for the betterment of children's fiction writing generally. This one is the second of her four novels about the Blossom family and features a classic cameo, Mad Mary the Vulture Lady. Yes, she got the name through competing with the neighbourhood vultures for animal carcasses. After chasing a couple of the unsavoury specimens away, she 'picked up the rabbit with one hand. The vultures had popped it open and pulled out part of the insides. Mad Mary liked to get meat that hadn't been run over five or six times. It was juicier.' Brilliant, there must be a spot on 'Spitting Images' for Mad Mary! BB

The Quest for Queenie

Brian Ball, ill. Scoular Anderson, Macdonald,
0 356 16053 X, £1.99

Rumbustious quest tale for sevens to nines in which spirited Harry and Jill pursue pet dog with the help of a magic sword. I like the writer's witty use of mythic origins – I told my eight and nine-year-old listeners part of 'The Ring' legend – and there's a well-

sustained sense of fun throughout. Like all good writers for the age group, Mr Ball keeps a sense of human foibles going: the two protagonists have the odd squabble; bubble gum is important; Mum wants them home for tea. Good pictures, too. CM

One Green Bottle

Hazel Townson, ill.
David McKee, Beaver,
0 09 956810 1, £1.50



A writer who can always be relied upon to provide funny and coherent tales for juniors. Here, there's a contemporary edge to the wit around the invention, and the subsequent stealing, of a board game called 'Redundo', with forfeits like 'More local government cuts – go back to Dole'. Satirical edge to exploits takes its appeal up to 11. Predictably inventive, quirky pictures from McKee. CM

Alf Gorilla

Michael Grater,
Magnet, 0 416 06432 9,
£1.75

This is an ideal 'once you've

picked me up, you won't put me down until you've reached the end' read. Great fun, not to be taken in any way seriously, but quite compulsive entertainment for a young audience. Cats are a problem to rats, and Oily Sludge (great name) is the largest and fiercest problem of all. Solution? Get some protection. So, Operation Minder is launched, as Batty and his gang of rats 'liberate' Alf the Gorilla from the zoo and train him as their protector. However, those of you with practical experience in training gorillas will realise that this task proves no easy matter! BB

Gruesome and Bloodsocks on Wheels

Jane Holiday, ill. Steven Appleby, Young Lions,
0 00 673046 9, £1.75



Eights up to elevens will enjoy this breathless yet well-written story. Gussie is a young vampire, as streetwise and assertive a heroine as I've encountered in a long time. Bloodsocks is her pet cat. Contemporary, tangy fun when Gruesome passes her

test, gets entangled with jewel thieves and has a good time sorting out the chaos she causes!

I like the writer's ear for dialogue. Her cultural markers are 'Top of the Pops' and the policemen sound straight out of 'The Bill'. I re-emphasise the book's appeal to *older* readers: the cover may mislead, and books which are racy enough for tens and elevens to both read *and* laugh at are still too rare. **CM**

Kit in Boots

Jane Gardam, Puffin,
0 14 03.2394 5, £1.75
The unlikeliest of packages

can contain the best goods. When I looked at the 'tree' cover of *Kit*, I could already feel the tide of nausea rising. How wrong could I be? Two extremely sensitive allegories of a girl's struggle to grow within the claustrophobic atmosphere and environmental limitations of moorland farm life are revealed through this compulsive little (only 107 pages) book. The second tale is particularly evocative, as the sensitive artist, 'Lonesome Jones', is silently mocked by Kit's farmer father whose often stated credo ('Work hard. There's nothing like it.') is the ethic by which he lives. The threat imposed to his

'philosophy' by the artist is fully justified as the story unfolds. **BB**

Charlotte the Starlet

Barbara Ware Holmes, ill. Alan Marks, Macdonald,
0 356 16451 9, £1.99
Smashing book by a new American writer who may come to rank with Beverly Cleary as a gifted storyteller for eights to elevens. Cleary's Ramona is probably Charlotte's nearest literary relation, though readers of Louise Fitzhugh's *Harriet the Spy* will find reverberations

when Charlotte makes up stories for classmates to liven up school and her domestic routine. She finds fame as a result of these; the stories she makes up are inventive, laugh-aloud tales. The classmates are a spirited bunch. Some lovely fresh insights for children into the act and art of writing, too. **CM**

Middle/Secondary

The Tournament of Fortune

Julian Atterton, Swallow, 0 86267 220 1, £2.25

1314, the Border Wars of Robert the Bruce and King Edward drag into their net the powerful warlords, the common peasant and the holy monk alike. Men change allegiance according to their sense of who currently rides high on the wheel of fortune; only very tattered vestiges of the true chivalric tradition linger, borne by such a one as Robert de Falaise, novice monk, bound by oath to stay within the cloister, yet soon to be snatched into the temporal world, where men are motivated by duplicity and spite. His own destiny slowly unravels as this well-told, enthralling story unfolds. Recommended for experienced lower/mid secondary readers. **DB**

On My Honour

Marion Dane Bauer, Piper, 0 330 30459 3, £1.99

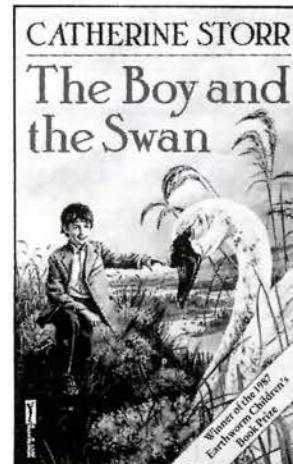
A very unusual book both in subject matter and treatment. As part of a sequence of events in which Tony has taunted and dared Joel to take up challenges, the two boys swim in an isolated, dirty and wild river. Tony, ever the daredevil, has set it all off but he can't swim. In an awful moment Joel loses sight of him and has to face the fact of Tony's death. There are no soft touches after this, just Joel in his helplessness trying to lie and avoid what has happened. And when he can't and the truth comes out, there is none of the simplicity of adult anger as a resolution, or even adult words to take the guilt away. At the end Joel just asks, simply, if his father will sit with him until he falls asleep and receives the reply, 'Of course'. So raw a treatment of death and guilt has all the feel of the real thing. A powerful read which will set off much thought. Probably

worth group or whole class attention. **AJ**

The Boy and the Swan

Catherine Storr, Piper,
0 330 30426 7, £1.99

A lonely child living in an isolated cottage with his deaf grandmother becomes fascinated by the stories of swans but finds that the romantic fantasy of their death is not matched by the death of the pair of swans he witnesses.



They have left a nest of eggs and he determines to hatch one out. The cygnet becomes his pride and joy, he identifies with it in his parentless state and it becomes a single, central joy to his life. His grandmother then has a stroke and dies, so he is taken to a home. When able to return to the swan in the hope of bringing it back, he has to face the fact that it has a new life to lead, as he does too when his mother is found, happy to find the boy she thought was lost to her. It's a spare story, thoughtfully and intelligently written. **AJ**

A for Ami

0 14 03.2469 0

A Name Like Bunny

0 14 03.2470 4

Norma Fox Mazer, Puffin, £1.95 each
Puffin are catching up. These

two have been given the look of twins with the same suitable photographs on the cover, similar titles, subtitles and stories. They look right for a whole group of readers in this age range and the American writer mines that area of young adolescence where uncertainty and the lure of the excitements of being a teenager are the facts of existence, and friendship between girls is the centre of day-to-day life. There's little by way of story – two girls, best friends, who enjoy their closeness, exploring and sharing ideas. Friendship is the core of *Ami*, they even share the same three letters for a name, and *Bunny* takes this one stage further with Bunny using her friend's name with a new boyfriend. The books are to do with verbal and imaginative comfort, with an air of jollity and empathy. Bound to be very popular with girls of this age group who will enjoy being able to go from one book to the next in such a simple fashion. **AJ**

A Hawk in Silver

Mary Gentle, Beaver,
0 09 955480 1, £1.99

A great many of the strengths of good fantasy and an ability to make the implausible solidly real and engrossing. There are a few creaks in the plot but it's powerful stuff in the main. Holly and Chris are drawn into the fantasy when a found silver coin becomes the object of attention from others and finally dissolves into dust. They become involved in a feud between two Faerie peoples begun in a far distant past. The tensions here and the tensions in the 'real' world are nicely balanced and there is a strong physicality about the whole book. The climax of the big battle is both tense and powerfully resolved. A good addition to the valuable but not overlarge selection of fantasy books that this age group can feed on. **AJ**

Swings and Roundabouts

Jean Ure, Magnet,
0 416 07372 7, £1.75

I suppose it makes a change to read about a stage-struck boy discovering, as they always do, 'it's not always easy... it's a tough business, kiddo, and them as can't take it knows what they can do.' Jason Miller longs for his first professional job out of the Allyson Dramatic Academy. His boasts about a commercial contract do not endear him to the real folk back on his London council estate, and even less so when it proves to be all hot air! Fortunately fame and a lesson in professionalism come from a cycling proficiency promotion and the ending is nicely neatened off. The strict adherence to Cockney dialect will put off some readers – most kids I know like talking to be 'written proper' not realistically! **DB**

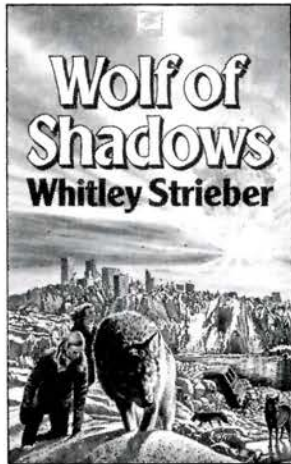
Monsterman

Jim Eldridge, Methuen
Teens, 0 416 09242 X,
£1.95



This humorous, outrageous spook story demands very elastic credibility as Nick Olsen, the total cynic, tackles vampires, poltergeists, werewolves and The Five Forces, all in the cause of true

love and to impress Jayne, a somewhat gullible beauty, infatuated by Zak, local occult bore. There's an endearing ironic humour as Nick manages to make a rational explanation for each of his conquests over the supernatural. This should make a good, funny antidote to gothic horror. DB



Wolf of Shadows

Whitley Strieber,
Lightning,
0 340 42611 X, £1.95

This original and moving story examines the way in which helpless life might struggle to survive the nuclear winter.

The will to live binds a human mother and daughter to a wolf

pack as they trek south from the Great Lakes, desperate for food and anxious with hope that they will conquer fear and cheat death. Told through the senses of a huge, brave, black wolf, this story makes compelling and very thought-provoking reading. There is a very real feeling of sincere and genuine concern about the book which makes it a cut above the usual rapid adventure read and certainly an original in nuclear holocaust literature. DB

Mr P: Street Pigeon

David Martin,
Macdonald,
0 356 10454 3, £2.50

Vincent can sympathise with the handsome but common pigeon who can't regain his proper home, for the lad himself had been sent from his beleaguered home to live with a fuss-pot aunt. Boy and bird form a companionship which culminates in the Cabor Pigeon Race, in which Mr P is entered despite the derision of 'proper' pigeon fanciers.

In part two the story really takes off (!) and the pigeon's turbulent flight and gutsy determination carry the book on a far more satisfactory course. There's a bit of 'here's all you need to know about pigeons' about it, but worth a library copy. DB

Sin Bin 1: Iggy

0 00 692954 0

Sin Bin 2: Melanie

0 00 692955 9

Keith Miles, Armada,
£1.95 each

I like Keith Miles' style in these two sensitive stories of adolescent development. However, by imposing the constraint of the Sin Bin as the location of the story, he is then faced with contriving situations that ensure the kids are 'dumped' there as early in the narrative as possible. This forced contrivance is naturally to the story's detriment; particularly unfortunate when the author has so much to contribute through his observations on the effect of peer group pressure on children's behaviour. But, despite this flaw, I still feel able to recommend the stories as good reads for the early teen years. BB

Shadows on the Lake

Catherine Sefton,
Magnet, 0 416 09452 X,
£1.95

Annie Orr is left to try and organise her brothers, Squirt and Baxter, after her mother's death. Dad has enough trying to provide for the family financially, so the brunt of the running of the home falls on the 13-year-old's shoulders. A Northern Ireland setting, with

the shadow of the 'Troubles' pervading the story, heightens the tension, further sharpened by the predicament that Baxter finds himself in. Annie's attempts to help are borne out of mistrust and panic, but the results leave the family more united than they have been since their mother died. BB



Gameplayers

Stephen Bowkett, Piper,
0 330 30412 7, £1.99

The acceptable face of adventure game books – five teenagers, John, Sean, Jeff, Raymond and Katie, whose hobby is fantasy gaming and whose personal lives reflect the adventures and characters of their game. The two levels

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operate throughout the book with credibility and the tensions existing between the characters of the game mirror those apparent between the players who manipulate them. The parallels are never laboured but often illuminating – John's growing confidence within the game enables him to emerge, in real life, from behind the character of daring, courageous Jan Wildblood and live his life more positively. VR

This book would particularly appeal to second and third-year boys with a fair degree of staying power – the character of Katie probably ensures female readership, too. VR

Bianca

Joan Phipson, Viking Kestrel, 0 670 82089 X, £4.95

This is an unusual book and one which I think second or

third-year pupils who enjoy mystery stories would find absorbing. Hubert, Emily and Paul Hamilton are picnicking by a dam when they see a young girl frantically rowing a small boat. She appears terrified but they eventually meet her and gain her confidence. As the story behind her odd behaviour unfolds, the reader is drawn into her family and that of Hubert, Emily and Paul.

I very much enjoyed the book – it alternately tugs at the strings of humour and sentimentality – but there were irritations. The Hamiltons are so determinedly English – yet they use dollars as currency – and the real reason for Bianca's flight from home never really rings true. Despite this, a book to be read – if capitation will allow you to afford it. VR

Older Readers



From *Frankie's Hat*.

Frankie's Hat

Jan Mark, Penguin Plus, 0 14 03.2018 0, £1.95

Three short stories, each with the characteristic sharp style of Jan Mark, each providing entertaining reading. The title story deals with Frankie, 17-year-old mother unexpectedly free of her baby for her seventeenth birthday and thoroughly indulging herself in harmless silliness.

The message is clear – perhaps rather heavy-handedly so; perhaps it was not intended as a warning, rather as a gentle reminder of the pitfalls of marrying young.

'Like It Is Round Here' tells the all-too-familiar story of Yo-Yo's new boyfriend who prefers to spend more time with her younger brother than with her. 'It Wasn't Me' is the weakest of the three stories – Ronda, doing her mother's cleaning job while she is ill, decides to give train passengers passing the flat something more than their usual view to look at. Third and fourth-year girls may well enjoy these stories – put them on the library shelves. VR

The Teens Book of Love Stories

Edited by Miriam Hodgson, Teens, 0 416 11962 X, £1.95

You'd expect good things from the galaxy of authors assembled here – and a K M Peyton foreword. These truly are love stories and not tales about sex. They focus mostly on the emotional ups and downs of adolescents as they experience those distinctly disruptive, bewildering feelings that are the heralds of early sexual attraction; typified by Ducker in 'Venus in Capricorn' by Michael Pearson, or Rebecca in Vivien Alcock's 'Second-Best Boy'. Tenderness is more the theme of 'Summer of the Ladybirds' by Berlie Doherty and the transitory nature of holiday infatuation is explored by Alison Prince in 'Stones'. Finally, I recommend Mollie Hunter's 'The Triumph of Love', where Alice wishes to marry Rajev against preacher father's wishes. DB

Dark Secrets, Red Ink

Steven Saunders, Macdonald, 0 356 16051 3, £1.99

I felt considerable enthusiasm for this book, after being heartily discouraged by the blurb. Jax (Jacqueline), Fliss and Ken are blessed with a Welsh trade unionist father and an academic, vague mother. Jax becomes a Socialist working for Red Ink, a party newspaper; Fliss becomes pregnant after one disastrous attempt at lovemaking; and Ken, hooked on old Marx Brothers films, is catapulted into the harsh world of reality when he takes part in a mass picket after being persuaded by Jax.

Not the stuff which fourth and fifth-year reading books are made of? I do have reservations but they're minor ones – a sprinkling of four-letter words to agitate twitchy parents, for example – and the book has much to offer by way of off-beat humour and a dynamic interplay of characters. Put it in the Wider Reading book box – for boys or girls – and prepare to be pleasantly surprised. VR

nicknamed 'Stick' because, according to her classmates, she resembles a stick insect and so is unlikely ever to secure a boyfriend. 11-year-old Chip, a Liverpudlian with a history of delinquency and defeated foster parents, adopts Paula and persuades her to help in renovating an old houseboat on the canal.

Steve Foster, school hero and heart-throb, becomes involved in the project and with Paula. Chip, sensing this, talks Paula into accompanying him to Liverpool in a fruitless quest for his missing mother. This is a book which raises issues of interest to teenagers – divorce in the family, the problems of boy/girl relationships, the fickleness of friends. It is competently written and should appeal to third-year girls – include it in the class or school library. VR

Grow Up, Cupid

June Oldham, Plus, 0 14 03.2006 7, £2.25

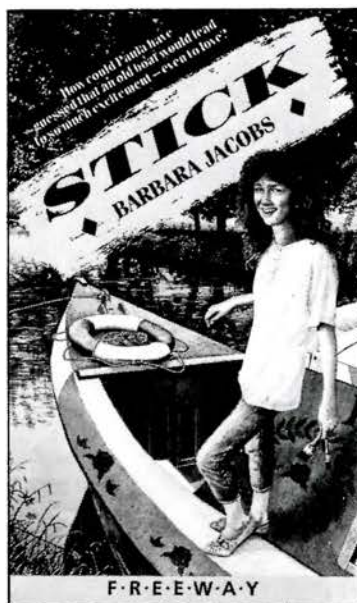
Mog's decision to give up men and devote her energies to writing a romantic novel hardly brought her lasting contentment; quite the reverse. She ended up one who 'had struggled with the conundrums of emotions, with contradictory sensations, with the investigations of profundities'.

This is a very wordy, lengthy tale, taking wry feminist side-swipes at such as colleges of higher education and their male principals, creative writing classes and the romantic novel. There's a sophisticated, ironic humour to the book, which might get lost on all but the tenacious reader. Thankfully the anti-hero, romantically named Bysse, makes Mog happy at the end. DB

King Creature Come

John Rowe Townsend, Swallow, 0 86267 221 X, £2.25

The Earth of the future is an impotent planet, inhabited by a small number of Persons who command as their servants the several thousand Creatures living outside the confines of their atmospherically controlled city. Persons despise Creatures as inferior



Stick

Barbara Jacobs, Corgi Freeway, 0 552 52473 5, £1.95

The title refers to Paula.

beings but Townsend reiterates an old truth – the majority who are suppressed by an unsympathetic or unobservant minority will, in time, overthrow their oppressors.



Vector and Harmony, unable to conform to a rule which forbids them to marry, decide to go 'outside'. They find the Creatures as sensitive as themselves and their living conditions appalling. They determine to redress the balance and find an ally in Helix, their tutor and confidante, a powerful political figure who senses the imminent rebellion of the Creatures and salvages from it some hope of a better future.

A deeply thoughtful and thought-provoking book which could be profitably linked with *Animal Farm* and Jan Mark's *The Ennead*. VR

The Kidnapping of Christina Lattimore

Joan Lowery Nixon,
Corgi Freeway,
0 552 52408 5, £1.95

Joan Lowery Nixon now has four books published in the Freeway series and they all have a similar speed of narrative and use of mystery with some neat twists of plot. Again, the character is played with (as the reader is too) and caught. We wait for the kidnapping to happen but Lowery Nixon is expert at playing with expectations and it's almost 40 pages and some mock climaxes before the event occurs. The expected climax of the rescue only deepens the mystery. Police and family are convinced that Christina set it all up. The second half becomes a nicely complicated attempt to find the person close to her who has deceived her. Seeds of doubt are sown about all the relevant characters and there is a brief sense of impossible complexity before the final resolution. A book which satisfyingly makes a bridge to adult writing. AJ

The River Tree

Mairi MacLachlan,
Swallow, 0 86267 219 8,
£2.25

This engaging short novel (106 pages) has as its central character Peg Price, who is 15 years old as the Second World War begins and whose family farm in the south of England. Ties are strong in this book – family, friends, community – and the characters inhabiting the pages are clearly and realistically drawn, providing a vivid microcosm of events on the larger canvas of Britain at war.

Peg struggles to reach maturity: denying the jealousy she feels when her hero and her sister fall in love; coming to terms with the death of their farmhand in the fighting; supporting her neighbour's son, Dan, in his stand as a conscientious objector. The River Tree of the title is the symbol for her attainment of that maturity and her realisation that she must be responsible for her own decisions and opinions.

Book box material, third-years plus – and don't ignore its fascinating historical content. VR



From the cover of *The River Tree*.

Crazy Vanilla

Barbara Wersba, Pan
Horizons, 0 330 30340 6,
£2.25

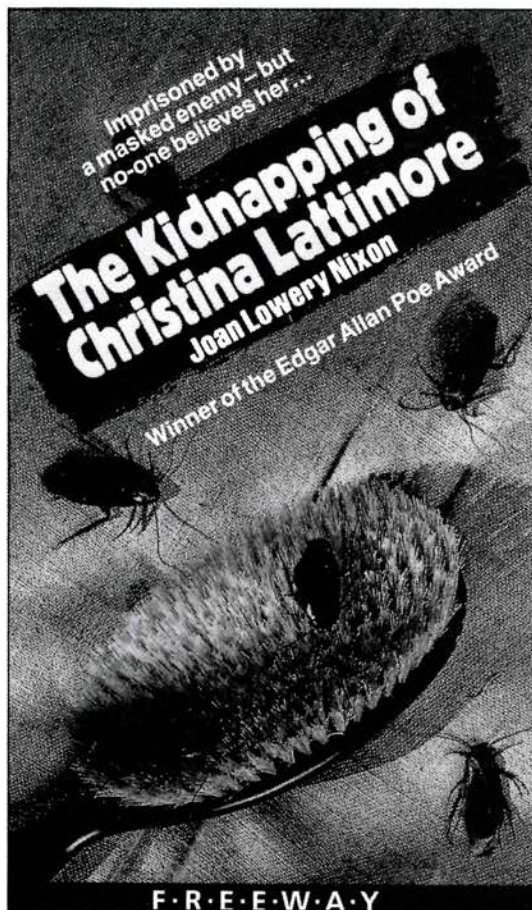
Not the best of Wersba books although packed with enough 'teenage reader' issues – gay brother, alcoholic mother, distant and unfeeling father, lonely and isolated younger son, girl friend with hippy mother plus boyfriends... Well, it's better than that catalogue suggests. There's enough skill to make some of

the relationships matter and it's interesting to have a boy weak and almost passive and a strong, resolute and independent girl. They meet through their love of photography and wild birds, and another nice touch is the way the girl, Mitzi, teaches Tyler that his pictures suffer from sentimentality. That's thoroughly believable. Something the book struggles against too. AJ

Making Waves

Mary Hooper, Methuen
Teens, 0 416 09222 5,
£1.95

At last a book about training to be a hairdresser. It might persuade a few reluctant older readers to drop their magazines and, if it persuaded them to do that permanently, it might be worth having in a book box. Certainly not hair-raising, all the drama and subtlety of a comb, but harmless in its way, bright and cheerful, undemanding and uncomplicated. AJ



Reviewers in this issue:

Jill Bennett
David Bennett
Bill Boyle
Adrian Jackson
Colin Mills
Val Randall
Judith Sharman
Liz Waterland

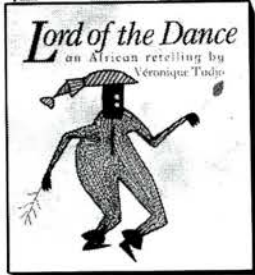


☆☆☆☆☆☆ **NEW** ☆☆☆☆☆

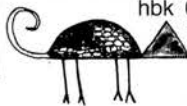
Vibrant Verse!



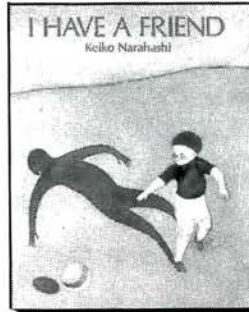
There's a poet behind you . . .
 Edited by **Morag Styles & Helen Cook**
 Grace Nichols, Adrian Mitchell, Gillian Clarke, Michael Rosen and John Agard, talk about how they write and present some of their best poems.
 hbk 0-7136-3056-6 £6.95



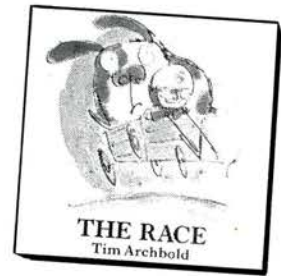
Lord of the Dance an African retelling
 Véronique Tadjo
 The story of the Senufo people of the Côte d'Ivoire and the Mask they worship, told in powerful verse and dazzlingly illustrated.
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Prize Picture Books!



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 Keiko Narahashi
 He follows me wherever I go, but when darkness comes, he disappears. Who is he?
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The Race
 Tim Archbold
 A small boy and a large hairy dog have to be home in time for dinner.
 hbk 0-7136-3035-3 £4.95

The Bears who went to the Seaside
 Susanna Gretz & Alison Sage
 One of the most popular teddybear stories now back in print with a new text.
 hbk 0-7136-2904-5 £4.95



Sparkling Stories!



Lively stories for children who are just beginning to enjoy reading.

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 Rose Impey 0-7136-3057-4

Jessy Runs Away
 Rachel Anderson 0-7136-3059-0



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 Peter Firmin 0-7136-3060-4

The Father Christmas Trap
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each hbk £3.95



Crackers 'One of the best and most amusing series of books for competent readers of seven to eleven'. *Junior Education*

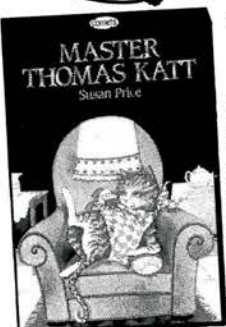
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Pongwiffy a witch of dirty habits
 Kaye Umansky
 An outrageously riotous story starring lovable if smelly Witch Pongwiffy
 hbk 0-7136-2994-0 £7.95



A & C Black

Authorgraph No. 53

Babette Cole



Lambing is difficult, because *everything* tends to be born at the time of the Bologna Book Fair – in fact, last November I had to put the ram off. I've been to Bologna every year, but next spring I *must* let Boo have her foal or she'd never forgive me. Bloody horses, they drive you mad – they're worse than children!

'There's a name for it, you know: equiphilia. It's an addiction affecting mostly English women, and it's very real – if you've not got a horse you feel as if someone's cut off your arm or leg. Horses are terribly necessary for me to function.'

Bubbly, zany, endlessly chatty, Babette Cole's name seems too apt to be true: can it be real? 'Course it is – what did you think it was, Muddy-All-Fours? My mother saw Babette on a gravestone in Jersey, where my parents had moved after the war, and thought it rather nice.' Her voice is 'rather nice', too, like a genteel little girl's – and totally at odds with her merry prettiness, peals and peals of wicked laughter and scandalous anecdotes. *They* belong to the Babette Cole of the endearing toothy monsters, the creepy-crawlies with bulging eyes and big noses. The voice may be a relic of the Jersey convent school, where a sense of discipline was instilled into what would otherwise have been 'a quait-out-of-order funny accent sort of person'. It takes discipline to weld the two sides of her life, so different and demanding.

She lives in a Babbettishly pretty 500-year-old cottage, up a lane leading deep into the Kentish countryside, with Benjy Big Boots (a lugubriously handsome basset-hound, whose grandmother was the original Hush Puppy) and Snuff (small, white and ancient), numerous accidental cats who have strayed in, recognising a good thing when they see it, four show-class horses, including Mr Flanagan, a splendid heavy cob who is, unbelievably, still not fat enough for top

showing, and Percy, a charmingly upper-crust version of a Thelwell Shetland. A substantial flock of sheep graze the hillside for the horses, and chicken potter around. St Plunket, an old but spirited two-seater, provides nippy transport to the outside world. The outside world means not only publishing London and showings like Hickstead, but also the West Indies, where she has friends and relatives.

Around the disciplined routine of the animals – mucking out, feeding, cleaning, exercising, schooling – she fits up to nine hours' work a day. 'And before Bologna, the sky's the limit: if need be I just don't sleep for a couple of days, because people are breathing down my neck whose jobs depend on me.'

'I get 60 letters a month from children, and great thick questionnaires from students. I answer the kids, but I won't visit schools, and I put off the students till I have a spare moment, which of course means they never get done. I could talk for seven days a week and never get *any* work done, just end up administering for Babette Cole, whoever she is. You have to channel and control your energy and enthusiasm into something productive. Now, Ron Van Der Meer is quite lunatic, but he's got Atie who's wonderful: I asked her to marry me, but she said she was allergic to horses . . .'

Such demands have grown oppressive, prompting her to consider capitalising on the Channel Tunnel property boom and move more cheaply northwards.

'It's flattering, but I would be happy with one book a year, not two or three – that's a lot of work, plus greetings cards and book jackets. Gordon Fraser are wonderful. I'm on a retainer for five a month, but I got terribly in debt to them from November till after Bologna, about 30 cards – I only caught up by the summer. And they said nothing – they're so sweet. Yet I hate being in the middle of a book, speeding along, only to stop and do the *cards* . . .'

'In reality I enjoy them. They take only a

few days, and I'm a good "ideas person" – the only thing I *am* good at. I call it mental diarrhoea. I throw all my ideas into a special drawer, and call on them later – my books all come from that drawer. No, they're never anything but jolly – I wouldn't know how to *start* a serious work! I could draw seriously, academically, if I wanted to: I could sit out there and make the house look like a photograph, but I'm not into that. Be quicker to trace it, or stick it in your epidiascope and blow it up (some people do), but I prefer to draw straight out of my head.

'I've always worked in a grotesque style. Indeed, I've softened it because it used to frighten people – I thought big noses and horrible monsters hysterically funny, but everyone else was terrified! Now all my characters look like Benjy – except Errol!' The wily and triumphant hero of **Three Cheers for Errol** is, she says, just like a certain fellow in her life, 'an inner city rat, very endearing and bright but no good at anything except getting his own way,' and she erupts into cascades of laughter.

'Slugs, caterpillars, all my life I've drawn slimy things (like that blinking water trough out there), which is probably why my stuff attracts children. It's often called "surreal" but to me the world really is like that – and just look at the carvings on Canterbury Cathedral benches, the leering little things on the choristers' stools.

'As for the script', that wobble with knobs on that makes kids laugh before they've even opened the book. 'I can't write any other way!!' (It's not possible to sedately erase the exclamation marks and italics from her speech.) 'I've never been very good at typography, and I've never found a typeface that actually suits my drawings.

'You can't have a coloured typeface against a coloured background when there are foreign editions, because of the cost. But while I was looking at the front of **Three Cheers for Errol**, and worrying at how weak, how terrible, the typography looked, I coloured it in with red – and that was it! I

phoned Ingrid Ingrid Selberg of Heinemann: "Get a felt pen and colour in that lettering . . . now you can see it from the end of the room! You've got to do it!" And she said, "I'll bloody kill you, Babette!" But it works it'll sell.

She co-operates with the production team on a book to the end, although, like other artists, she's never satisfied. "I get fairly hysterical over the production process – loss of contrasts, out of register, even thumbprints and smudges, just because some lazy person didn't clean the plate. There goes months of your life!

"It takes me half an hour to do a story, but four months for the pictures. Once the dummy, the creative part, is finished, the artwork becomes a chore, and my drawings are not as intricate as they once were."

Neither, in spite of everything, is her life. The complexity of timetabling lambs, foals and books does not compare with the twelve years she spent with an anthropologist, living for a while in the Okavango Delta of Botswana with the Yei, tactfully dodging the honour of the 'European toilet' (even the goats detoured round it) and battling against the malarial 'Okavango flu'. When it wasn't hair-raising it was boring, and she busied herself illustrating local myths to give the youngsters something more relevant to their lives than Janet and John. Macdonald later published three books, which Collins are reissuing.

The anthropologist, she says, had to grow up, keep his place in the academic rat-race, return to Africa. "I didn't want to grow up: I could earn my living doing just what I was doing. I'd have had a family if I'd ever met a suitable partner, but now I treasure every moment on my own – I don't want to have to cook, do housework, hear complaints whenever I'm out on a horse. But I'm a sucker for down-and-outs! Like stray cats.

Behind the effervescence and the jokes, however, there has always been a grown-up. She had already worked in advertising before she went to the Canterbury College of Art, so she always knew what she *didn't* want to do.

"I spent every minute trying to get out of that art school. I was not a good graphic designer but I could get past, so I whizzed through their silly projects like lightning and set my own, with lots of printmaking. I love etching, and still have an etching press though I have no time now – it's worth thousands but I'll never sell for I know I'll get back to it. In those days there were few illustration courses, but by my third year I was producing my own little books which everyone liked except my tutors, who thought I should have been doing my Letraset, sitting up properly and not wearing my wellingtons into art school.

"Right, I thought, I'll publish: who's the best publisher? Jonathan Cape. So I marched up to see Tom Maschler. "Oh yes, very good, but we don't know who you are, nor what you've done before, and we've never seen anything like this." This was the original Prom (her much-loved pony heroine) 'but they simply wouldn't do it. The World was Not Ready for Babette Cole in 1973 – at least, Tom Maschler wasn't!

"So I thought I'd get in through the back door. I went to evening classes in life drawing (would you believe there were *no* life classes in graphic design?) with all the old codgers, and one of them told me about "a delightful little man, Peter Firmin, who does that delightful little Basil Brush". I rang him, told him I was really good, and he said I'd better come and see *him!*"

Which is how she came to work with Watch with Mother, Ivor the Engine and Bagpuss,



doing TV storyboards, getting her work on television and into a BBC Annual. Rosemary Debnam and Rosemary Sandberg came to look at Prom, and she adapted her to the comic-book style they wanted – and she was off. Thus Firmin led to the Kaye & Ward/Heinemann association.

With the same disciplined doggedness she saw the blossoming of pop-ups and decided to pull one apart to see how it worked in order to make her own dummy. Macdonald, who had published her African books, thought it lovely but unaffordable. "They took it to Bologna, and *guess who saw it and pinched it?! Wally!*" (That means Wally Hunt of Inter Visual, at that time *the* name in the field.) A free trip to California – it seemed her fortune was made.

"It turned out to be the only book of mine to be remaindered. It was a pull-out like a little theatre, a great book, but they shrink-wrapped it and no one displayed it properly in the shops." But a pop-up *Wind in the Willows*, distributed by Methuen, followed.

The profitable and pleasurable association with Gordon Fraser came through an introduction by fellow artist Anthony Browne, and it was this that allowed her to get her life together, have her own home and do the books she always knew she could.

Without conscious effort, her humour is international, and her foreign sales are enormous. Prom, her original baby, has a special place in her affections, but many readers treasure the extra dimension, the subtle poignancy underlying the exuberance, of *The Trouble with Mum*.

"Poignant? What about *Princess Smartypants* – that's *incredibly* poignant! That's my autobiography – a complete lack of princes because they've all been driven off!!" And she rocks with laughter, till she has to wipe the tears away. ●

Babette Cole was interviewed by Stephanie Nettell.

Photographs by Richard Mewton.

The Books

Beware of the Vet. Hamish Hamilton, 0 241 10813 6, £5.95; Magnet, 0 416 51560 6, £1.50 pbk

The Hairy Book. Cape, 0 224 02193 1, £4.95; Magnet, 0 416 95760 9, £1.95 pbk

Hocus Pocus. compiled by Lesley Young, Hamish Hamilton, 0 241 11013 0, £5.95; Magnet, 0 416 52450 8, £1.95 pbk

King Change-a-lot. Hamish Hamilton, 0 241 12491 3, £6.95

Nungo and the Crocodile. Picturemac, 0 333 39360 0, £2.50 pbk

Prince Cinders. Hamish Hamilton, 0 241 12138 8, £6.95

Princess Smartypants. Hamish Hamilton, 0 241 11885 9, £5.95; Picture Lions, 0 00 662798 6, £1.95 pbk

Promise and the Monster. Collins, 0 00 184034 7, £4.95

The Slimy Book. Cape, 0 224 02843 X, £4.95; Picture Lions, 0 00 662840 0, £1.95 pbk

The Smelly Book. Cape, 0 224 02454 X, £5.95

Three Cheers for Errol. Heinemann, 0 434 93299 X, £5.95

The Trouble with Dad. Heinemann, 0 434 93295 7, £5.95; Picture Lions, 0 00 662734 X, £1.95 pbk

The Trouble with Gran. Heinemann, 0 434 93296 5, £5.95; Picture Lions, 0 00 662873 7, £2.25 pbk

The Trouble with Grandad. Heinemann, 0 434 93294 9, £5.95

The Trouble with Mum. Picture Lions, 0 00 662377 8, £1.95 pbk

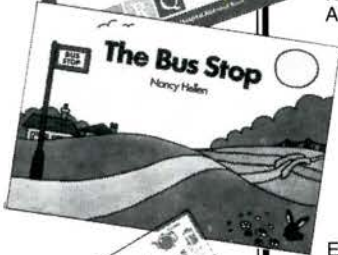
The Wind in the Willows. Kenneth Grahame, Methuen, 0 416 44440 7, £6.95

A B C

What books should they be reading?
It's as easy as **A B C**



THE G.O.S.H. ABC BOOK
The Great Ormond Street
Hospital Alphabet Book
All profits go to the Hospital.
ISBN 1-85406-013-9
£5.95 29 September



THE BUS STOP
Nancy Hellen
A surprise on every page.
ISBN 1-85406-005-8
£4.95 8 September

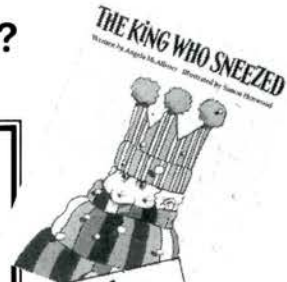


**MISS POPPY
MR BADGER**
E. MacDonald and C. Smith
Classic stories and pictures.
ISBNs 1-85406-006-6
1-85406-007-4
£4.95 8 September

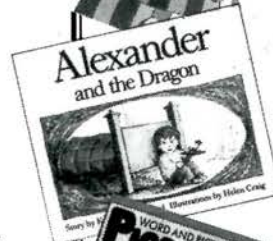
**ANGELINA BALLERINA
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1-85406-015-5
12 x 1, £30, 10 September



THE KING WHO SNEEZED
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Colourful words and pictures.
ISBN 1-85406-009-0
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**ALEXANDER AND THE
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£6.95 8 September



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8 September



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LIFELINE 4: PROJECTS AND TOPICS

Pat Thomson continues her seven-part series

Putting a project together ideally begins with an unhurried survey of all the resources, and then a drawing together of the elements which most suit the age and ability of your particular group of children. If time seems short and information about resources seems less accessible than you would hope, this **Books for Keeps** Lifeline series may help.

For the 5-12 age range, each section covers one major topic and suggests non-fiction books, stories and poems related to the one theme. The addresses of organisations which offer help and material to schools are also included. The result should be a broadly based range of options which remind you of good material, inform you about new books and maybe even suggest new approaches within the chosen theme. If they won't give you a research assistant, use **BfK** instead!

Other themes to be covered in the series include Food. Previous themes covered: House and Home (**BfK** 51, July 88) and Water (**BfK** 52, September 88).

PART 3: CLOTHING

Clothes, from the original fibre or chemical to the grand creations from the past, are covered in this list of suggested books for the 5-12s.

INFORMATION BOOKS

Materials and Processes

The Story of Wool. Geoffrey Patterson, Deutsch 1987, 0 233 97923 9, £5.95. Boldly executed, coloured drawings add considerable appeal to a picture book which starts with a line-up of different breeds of sheep. Essentially for dipping into, the facets chosen are all good talking points.

Wool. Annabelle Dixon, A & C Black 1988, 0 7136 3049 3, £4.50. There is more emphasis on activity in this **Threads** series title which goes from sheep to sweater, encouraging even the youngest to observe and experiment.

For older children, **Focus on Wool.** Andrew Langley, Wayland 1985, 0 85078 617 7, £5.95, goes into more detail. It starts by explaining what wool actually is, and then follows the process from sheep to garment. Illustrations are mainly well-chosen photographs. See also **Focus on Cotton.** Lewis Miles, Wayland 1986, 0 85078 668 1, £5.95.

The Silkworm Story. Jennifer Coldrey, Deutsch 1983, 0 233 97553 5, £4.95. The main information text comes in an introductory section and then Oxford Scientific Films takes over with a series of astonishing photographs with captions.

Fuzzy and Furry. Vicki Cobb, A & C Black 1987, 0 7136 2990 8, £4.95, looks in detail at thread and fibre. Part of the cheerful **Science Safari** series which introduces investigative science to infants.

Clothes. Heather Govier, Macdonald 1987, 0 356 13224 2, £4.99. 'Why wear clothes at all?' is the first question. Double spreads look at natural fibres, man-made fibres and the separate processes. There are activity and information boxes scattered throughout and a 'technology to try' section. The sometimes confusing layout is balanced by a lively and innovative style.

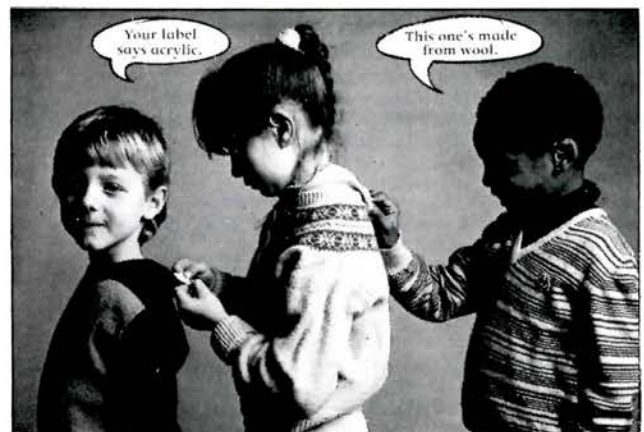
Textiles. Kathryn Whyman, Watts 1988, 0 86313 767 9, £5.95. This middle age-range book in the **Resources Today** series demonstrates vividly in one of its 'Fact Files' that fibres today can be animal, vegetable or mineral. Although there is only one page of text per topic in most cases, the overview is thoroughly comprehensive.

Made to Wear

Sweater. Kathy Henderson, Macdonald 1986, 0 356 11553 4, £2.95. A conversational picture book, one double spread per simplified process, from the farm to Tom and Michael's sweaters.

The Very Special Sari. Feroza Mathieson, A & C Black 1988, 0 7136 3064 7, £4.50. A wedding in India, like anywhere else, demands special clothes. The narrative style and good photographs make it possible for the youngest to follow the making of the garment.

Making Shoes. Ruth Thomson, Watts 1986, 0 86313 430 0, £5.25. Large print and clear photographs but younger children may need



From **Wool** by Annabelle Dixon.

help with the technical terms. A pair of trainers is followed from a sheet of foam-backed nylon to the familiar Clarks' box.

The Textile Industry in the Past

Weavers and Outworkers in Victorian Times. Peter Searby, Longman 1980, 0 582 23017 9, £1.75 pbk. Intended for older children, but well worth interpreting for younger, this book uses a lot of contemporary accounts. The 'outwork' industries are covered - ribbon weavers, straw plaiters (for hats) and button makers. An interesting sidelight, especially as children were heavily involved in outwork.

Textiles. Don Hale and Martyn Vickers, Edward Arnold 1982, 0 7131 0587 9, o/p. Concentrates on the trade in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The factory system is traced through the people, raw materials and the new machinery. The final chapters look at the decline of the industry and the rise of man-made fibres. Includes a 'things to do' section.

Mill. David Macaulay, Collins 1983, 0 00 195545 4, £6.95. Macaulay's skill in making technicalities clear is again in evidence. The first chapter explains the technical principles, and then we see the development of a series of cotton mills, powered by water, each more advanced, until the Harwood Mill can boast the first steam engine. Useful drawings, exploded diagrams and imaginative text.

Costume, Past and Present

A useful starting point for the teacher and older pupil is **Costume History 1500-1900**, Valerie Cumming, Batsford 1981, 0 7134 1829 X, £10.95. It begins with a section on project work, discussing sources

and methods, then each section starts with fashion in its historical context for that time, before going on to actual items of clothing. Wonderfully detailed (prices, shops, technical developments) and well organised.

The Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries, Nellie Roberts, 0 521 30298 6, £3.95 (0 521 31622 7, £1.95 pbk) and **The Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries**, Helen Herbert, 0 521 30809 7, £3.95 (0 521 31326 0, £1.95 pbk) are part of the **The Clothes they Wore** series, Cambridge 1986. Inexpensive, with coloured pictures, they offer simple sketches with notes on different aspects, such as 'sculptured hair' or 'military styles'.

Clothes, Marjorie Wilkerson, Batsford 1970, 0 7134 1766 8, £8.95. A comprehensive overview in the **Past into Present** format. Includes a section on children's clothes.

Clothes in History, Charlotte Sewell, Wayland 1983, 0 85078 308 9, £5.50. One of the interesting **Picture History** series, where a picture can be used as an original source of historical information, as well as a relatively easy text.

Looking Back at Clothes and Fashion, Anne Mountfield, Macmillan 1988, 0 333 43941 4, £6.50 pbk. Arranged not by period, but by aspect, this book picks out a multiplicity of facets. Some are major, like manufacturing, some are minor but fascinating, like 'decency and decoration'. The quiz is actually quite good!

Batsford have produced a number of books with adult texts which can be usefully employed. Professionals in this field use picture research and children can use these books in the same way:

FICTION AND POETRY

Picture Books

Bear Gets Dressed, Harriet Ziefert and Arnold Lobel, Viking Kestrel, 0 670 81091 6, £3.95. Folded pages make this a guessing game – choose the right garment.

Alfie's Feet, Shirley Hughes, Bodley Head, 0 370 30416 0, £5.25; **Picture Lions**, 0 00 662161 9, £1.95 pbk. Alfie gets some splendid new wellies, but there's something odd about them. Brings in right and left.

Nini at Carnival, Errol Lloyd, Bodley Head, 0 370 30023 8, £5.50; **Picture Puffin**, 0 14 050.578 4, £1.75 pbk. Includes lots of pictures of unusual costumes.

Mister Magnolia, Quentin Blake, Cape, 0 224 01612 1, £5.95; **Picture Lions**, 0 00 661879 0, £1.95 pbk. A footwear problem resolved in irresistible rhyme.

Bare Bear, Jez Alborough, Knight, 0 340 37446 2, £1.95 pbk. Bear boldly removes his polar gear to reveal a bare bear.

The Long Blue Blazer, Jeanne Willis and Susan Varley, Andersen, 0 86264 179 9, £5.95. Enchanting, unexpected story in which a mystery boy arrives in his long, blue blazer. Spare and direct, but the mystery lingers.

Catch That Hat!, Emma Chichester Clark, Bodley Head, 0 370 31179 5, £5.95. When that hat blows away, a whole string of animal friends unsuccessfully pursue it. Strong, subtle colours enhance the pictures.

New Clothes for Alex, Mary Dickinson and Charlotte Firmin, Deutsch, 0 233 97685 X, £3.95; **Hippo**, 0 590 70446 X, £1.75 pbk. A shopping expedition on which Alex finds just the sort of new clothes he likes.

No Roses for Harry!, Gene Zion and Margaret Bloy Graham, Bodley Head, 0 370 00718 2, £5.95; **Picture Puffin**, 0 14 050.016 2, £1.95 pbk. A very old favourite! The original dirty dog rejects his new, flowery sweater.

A New Coat for Anna, Harriet Ziefert and Anita Lobel, Julia MacRae, 0 86203 286 5, £6.25. Touching story of the way in which a wartime shortage is overcome and, along the way, we see all the stages involved in getting Anna her much-needed new coat.

The Quilt Story, Tony Johnston and Tomie de Paola, Macdonald, 0 356 16054 8, £4.99; 0 356 16055 6, £2.50 pbk. A quilt, stitched long ago, survives the years to comfort another little girl, just as it comforted its original owner.

A Visual History of Costume: the seventeenth century, Valerie Cumming, 1984, 0 7134 4093 7, £12.95. One example from an authoritative series which covers the sixteenth to nineteenth centuries. Contemporary illustrations show dress and accessories, each picture having notes divided into 'head', 'body' and 'accessories' which illuminate or enlarge on the picture information.

History of Women's Costume, Marion Sichel, 1984, 0 7134 1515 0, £8.95. Line drawings and substantial notes, from Ancient Greece to the twentieth century. Especially good on detail – a powder puffer for wigs, the superstructure of the bustle. Useful glossary of fashion terms at the back. See also **Children's Costume**, 0 7134 1517 7, £8.95.

Shoes, June Swann, 1982, 0 7134 0942 8, £10.95. The format is period portraits plus notes and, as the author is the country's foremost expert on the subject, the notes are full and fascinating. There is a preamble to each section on particular details, like heels and fastenings. Worth making this kind of expertise available to children, even if you do have to help out with the occasional word.

Clothes for particular purposes are covered by a series published by Wayland, called **Costumes and Clothes**. Written by Miriam Moss in 1988, **Clothes in Hot Weather**, 1 85210 102 4, and **Clothes in Cold Weather**, 1 85210 103 2, £5.95 each, look at function and location under these conditions; **Working Clothes** (1987), 0 85078 990 7, £5.95, looks at protective clothing, public service clothing and the rather more exotic costumes of the entertainment world; **Uniforms** (1988), 0 85078 991 5, £5.95, is divided into fighting and civilian uniforms, so there is not only the expected soldiers but also school uniform, religious clothing and punks. A way into the topic for some might well be **Sports Clothes** by Philip Dicks (1987), 1 85210 098 2, £5.95, in the same series.

One title which has an historical approach and yet contains a lot of current information is **Exploring Clothes**, Brenda Ralph Lewis, Wayland 1988, 1 85210 006 0, £6.50. The suggested activities offer a different, often analytical, approach. The two final projects are a local history investigation, based on old newspapers, and a 'futuristic' design idea. A list of costume collections is appended.

Short Stories

Ramona and Her Mother, Beverly Cleary, Puffin, 0 14 03.1328 1, £1.95 pbk. See 'Slacks for Ella Funt' and 'Ramona's New Pyjamas'.

The Faithless Lollybird, Joan Aiken, Cape, 0 224 01332 7, o/p. In the title story, a magical weaving bird is tried too far and flies away, pursued by the repenting weaver. Intriguing mixture of traditional and modern elements.

The Fib and Other Stories, George Layton, Lions, 0 00 671808 6, £1.95 pbk. In 'Balaclava Story' mum won't buy the essential balaclava, which leads to a nasty situation which is retrieved by a very clever twist in the plot! Well crafted story for 8+.

Many traditional stories refer to clothing and textile processes. See, for example, **The Emperor's New Clothes** and **The Swan Brothers** from Andersen, **The Elves and the Shoemaker** and **Rumpelstiltskin** from Grimm.

Novels from 10 and up

Midnight is a Place, Joan Aiken, Cape, 0 224 00968 0, £6.95; **Puffin**, 0 14 03.0836 9, £2.95 pbk. The sort of story where wrongs are triumphantly righted after much hardship, the darker scenes being set in a carpet-weaving factory.

The Wool-Pack, Cynthia Harnett, Puffin, 0 14 03.0153 4, £2.50 pbk. The fifteenth-century wool trade vividly recreated. Great detail in both the story and the meticulous illustration.

Spellcoats, Diana Wynne Jones, Macmillan, o/p. As Tanaqui weaves the coats, she is woven into the history of Dalemark and becomes the intermediary between the dangerous present and the living past.

Howl's Moving Castle, Diana Wynne Jones, Methuen, 0 416 61590 2, £7.95; **Teens**, 0 416 07442 1, £1.95 pbk. Sophie is resigned to the hat trade, but in a country where seven-league boots and cloaks of invisibility exist, a dull life is not really likely. A funny, romantic, inventive story.

Poetry

A single location for each poem is given so consult your own collections. The first poems are for the youngest, rising through the age range.

'These are the clothes that my big brother wore' by Clive Riche and 'Paws' by Stanley Cook in **A Very First Poetry Book** by John Foster, Oxford, 0 19 916051 1, £4.95; 0 19 916050 3, £2.95 pbk.

'I can tie my shoe laces', anon., in **Rhymes Around the Day** by Jan

Ormerod and Pat Thomson, Viking Kestrel, 0 670 80793 1, £5.95; Picture Puffin, 0 14 050.424 9, £1.75 pbk.

The Quangle Wangle's Hat by Edward Lear and Helen Oxenbury, Heinemann, 0 434 95596 5, £6.95; Picture Puffin, 0 14 050.062 6, £1.75 pbk.

The Old Man and the Edible Suit by Edward Lear and Jon Atlas Higham, Macmillan, 0 333 41384 9, £5.50; Picturemac, 0 333 45283 6, £2.50 pbk.

'Happiness' in **When We Were Very Young** by A A Milne, Methuen, 0 416 39280 6, £5.50; 0 416 22580 2, £1.50 pbk.

'Action Man' by Stanley Cook, 'Chester's Undoing' by Julie Holder, 'My Sock' by Ivor Cutler and 'Clothes' by Elizabeth Jennings, all in

A Second Poetry Book by John Foster, Oxford, 0 19 918137 3, £4.95; 0 19 918136 5, £2.95 pbk.

'If you don't put your shoes on' and 'I've had this shirt' in **Mind Your Own Business** by Michael Rosen, Deutsch, 0 233 96468 1, £4.95; Young Lions, 0 00 670959 1, £1.95 pbk.

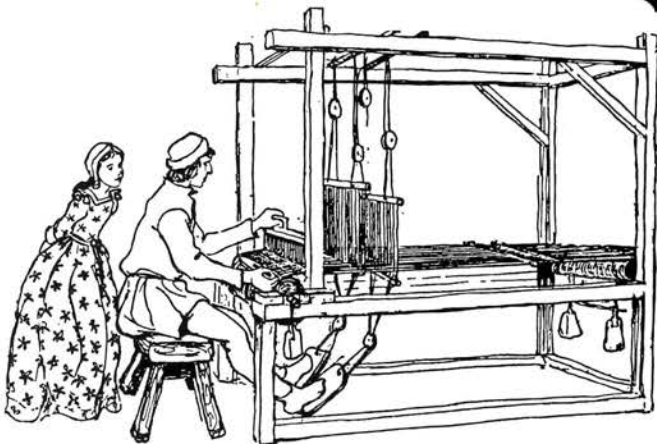
'Wedding Day' in **Song of the City** by Gareth Owen, Collins, 0 00 184846 1, £4.95; Lions, 0 00 672410 8, £1.95 pbk.

'Frank Carew MacGraw' by Terry Jones, 'Five Little Brothers', anon., and 'Grandma' by Ted Hughes, all in **The Kingfisher Book of Comic Verse** by Roger McGough, 0 86272 217 9, £6.95.

'Greensleeves', anon. in **Talking to the Sun** by Kenneth Koch and Kate Farrell, Viking Kestrel, 0 670 81450 4, £10.95.



From *Ramona and Her Mother*.



A man throwing a shuttle . . . through a maze of lines and threads

From *The Wool Pack*.



Porcelain figures as an illustration to 'Greensleeves' in *Talking to the Sun*.

USEFUL ADDRESSES

The following organisations offer information or materials. The items mentioned are those which are free or available for a nominal sum. Enquiries to the following addresses - an s.a.e. is usually appreciated:

British Man-Made Fibres Federation

24 Buckingham Gate
London
SW1E 6LB
(Booklet)

British Wool Marketing Board

Oak Mills
Clayton
Bradford
West Yorkshire
BD14 6TD
(Charts, leaflets)

Dylon International Ltd

Worsley Bridge Road
London
SE26 5HD
(Leaflet)

International Wool Secretariat

Education Department
Wool House
Carlton Gardens
London
SW1Y 5AE
(Leaflets)

The Knitting Council

Calshot House
Calshot
Southampton
SO4 1JF
(Leaflets, books)

Proctor & Gamble Education Service

P O Box 1EE
Gosforth
Newcastle-upon-Tyne
NE99 1EE
(Leaflets)

Science Museum

Education Service
Exhibition Road
London
SW7 2DD
(Worksheets)

Silk Education Service

Parkett Hayes House
Broken Cross
Macclesfield
Cheshire
SK11 8TZ
(Booklet)

If you have £6.45, **Oxfam** has a pack, based on the resist-dyed indigo cloth from West Nigeria, which involves a whole variety of activities:

Alero Activity Pack
Oxfam Education Dept
Oxfam House
274 Banbury Road
Oxford
OX2 7DZ

Pat Thomson is Professional Studies Librarian at Nene College of Higher Education, past chair of the Federation of Children's Book Groups, and author of the 'Share-a-Story' series from Gollancz.

AWARDS

13 OTHER YEARS:

THE OTHER AWARD 1975-1987

Rosemary Stones, co-founder of the Award, looks back

It's important to remember that in 1975 books with active, enterprising girls, books in First Languages or books which presented the authentic Black British or ordinary state school experience were both few and far between and hard to find if you were not a children's book specialist. As members of Children's Rights Workshop, Andrew Mann and I were meeting Black parents' groups, groups on estates campaigning around play provision, children on Travellers' sites and so forth. We were made keenly aware of the gulf between the world as depicted in children's literature and the variety and richness of all those other worlds whose existence and validity were not being acknowledged in books.

Alongside our campaigning work on children's books, we wanted to do something positive, something that would draw attention to new or neglected work from children's writers and illustrators who were reaching the parts not usually reached. An Award – the singling out for praise and attention of progressive books – seemed to us to be a flamboyant and entertaining way both to promote new kinds of writing for children and focus critical attention on 'other' concerns.

We assembled a panel; together we evolved criteria and each year published a press release and held a public meeting at which our 'winners' were invited to speak about their books and our audience to question them and us, the panel. As the Award developed, we added more panel members, refined our criteria to take in such issues as books for and about children with disabilities, and published a poster featuring our 'winning' titles. The word 'winners' is necessarily in quotes as we in fact offered no prize other than the glory of winning. (Recipients of the Other Award were remarkably good-humoured about the absence of a cheque.)

The proof of the pudding is in the eating and, looking back over 13 years' worth of Other Award winners (we awarded three or four books each year), I think we picked them.

Some of our winners can now be seen to be pioneering examples of educational books whose approach is these days firmly established. I think of such titles as Mary Waterson's *Gypsy Family* (A & C Black), a photo-story book about a Traveller family; Basil Davidson's first non-colonialist history of Africa, *Discovering Africa's Past* (Longman); Peter Heaslip's *Terraced House* and *Next Door* books (Methuen) which reflect the everyday experience of Primary children; Angela V John's *Coalmining Women* (Cambridge Educational) which focused on women's history; and David McDowell's *The Palestinians* (Franklin Watts), an exceptionally clear account of the history and present-day situation of this dispossessed nation.

We also picked novels of enduring significance – Susan Price's *Twopence a Tub* (Faber) about the Dudley miners' first strike; Farrukh Dhondy's *East End at Your Feet* (Macmillan Topliner) and *Come to Mecca* (Lions) with their multi-racial inner London settings; Gene Kemp's *The Turbulent Term of Tyke Tiler* (Faber) with its good humoured gender twist; James Watson's powerful *Talking in Whispers* (Gollancz) about Chile after Allende; Beverley Naidoo's moving *Journey to Jo'Burg* (Longman Knockouts/Lions) about the children of South Africa; and Timothy Ireland's *Who Lies Inside* (GMP) in which a sixth-former comes to realise and accept that he is gay. Such Other Award winners (and there is no space to list them all) are works of lasting literary quality which also address the pre-occupations, issues and concerns of our times.

For younger readers we chose Shirley Hughes' *Helpers* (Bodley Head) which broke new ground with its working Mum and male baby-sitter; John Agard's lively *Say It Again, Granny* (Bodley Head) with its dialect poetry; and the Peckham Publishing Project's *Our Kids* which showed how community publishing could serve as a vehicle for local creativity and interests.



Above, the Other Award Panel in 1985: Andrew Mann, Peter Griffiths, John Vincent, Rosemary Stones, Robert Leeson, Grace Hallworthy and Mary Hoffman.

Right, Rosemary Stones.



There were also those books which got away. Every award must impose restrictions of some kind on entry but, with hindsight, I feel that the Other Award was ill-equipped to respond to innovative illustration – Errol Lloyd and Lisa Kopper are two notable non-winners whose pioneering contributions reflect Other Award concerns. But if we didn't get it right all the time (and I can think of other omissions), I believe we got it right enough of the time to make a useful, provocative and stimulating contribution to debate around children's literature.

Why then kill off the Other Award? A primary reason is that to continue to develop and respond to public interest, the Other Award would have to seek sponsorship – an award privately funded and managed by two individuals on a shoestring cannot meet the publicity and marketing needs of a literary award in the thrusting eighties. We don't want to go down this road. The second reason is that we no longer think an award is an appropriate way to promote 'other' concerns. In 1975 the Other Award was established as an irritant and counter to the Carnegie, the Kate Greenaway and the Guardian awards. In these Smarties days, it's hard enough to see the books for the plethora of awards getting in the way.

So, after 13 years, we end the Other Award – not because all the 'other' battles have been won but because it's time to think of new and imaginative ways of winning them.

The members of the Other Award panel were:

Peter Griffiths, Education Officer, Thames Television
Grace Hallworthy, storyteller
Mary Hoffman, children's book reviewer and writer
Robert Leeson, children's book writer and critic
Andrew Mann, Co-ordinator, South Bank Family Rights
Barbara McKellar, Lecturer in Education, South Bank Polytechnic
Rosemary Stones, children's book critic
John Vincent, Principal Librarian, London Borough of Lambeth

Former Other Award panel members: Cecilia Gordon, Ziggi Alexander

The Other Award would like to thank **Books for Keeps** for its consistent support and coverage over the years.

Rosemary Stones is now Senior Editor for the Lions imprint at Collins. Her own latest book is *Some Day My Prince Won't Come: More Stories for Young Feminists* published by Piccadilly Press (1 85340 021 1, £6.50).

AWARDS

THE EMIL AWARD

Chris Powling, one of the judges, on this year's Emil Award, announced this month

The trouble with foregone conclusions is that everyone of integrity feels a fierce need to combat any hint of a put-up job. So Elaine Moss, Margaret Meek, Tom Maschler and I spent an inordinate amount of time *resisting* mention of the book that – as it transpired afterwards – we all knew in our heart of hearts was the best 'matching of text and illustration' we'd come across in 1988. As with **The Jolly Postman**, our 1986 winner, we found ourselves behaving like four cardsharps with sleeves assiduously concealing the same ace.

And, as in 1986, this is no comment at all on the quality of the rest of the entry – on the contrary it struck each of us as better than usual. Though this year certainly threw up a record number of entries it would be polite to call 'speculative', it also brought an exceptional bunching of front-runners. We admitted to great difficulty in whittling down to seven or eight titles the books we felt worth discussing at our final meeting . . . books that in almost any other year would have been potential winners.

Take **Can It Be True?**, for instance. Fair enough, this won't appeal to everybody but who can deny the sheer *stylishness* of Susan Hill's words and Angela Barrett's decorations? Similarly, Colin McNaughton's text for **Jolly Roger** may sprawl a little too much for some tastes but criticism of it virtually comes to (Mc)naught when account is taken of those inventive, varied, comicbook-on-tiptoe pictures. Both are very much the kind of near-misses that end up defining the bullseye. So, too, is **The Mighty Slide** with Allan Ahlberg spreading his verse, more extensively than is his habit, across five stories superbly pointed up by Charlotte Voake. Her black-and-white vignettes have the sort of sharpness and flair that makes most full-colour jobs look pallid. And what about **Black Beauty**? Has the late Charles Keeping ever been better – even when winning last year with Charles Causley's **Jack the Treacle Eater**? To top off the almost-but-not-quitely, we were enchanted with Martin Waddell's superbly judged, bedtime narrative, **Can't You Sleep, Little Bear?**, wonderfully complemented by Barbara Firth with pictures so fresh, witty and gentle they deserved, and got, the very best of canny Walker designerliness. Just about a perfect picture book, in fact.



A Mad Tea Party, from *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*.

Which makes all the more astonishing our unanimous winner-by-acclaim, **Alice's Adventures in Wonderland**, as interpreted by Anthony Browne. This will come as no surprise to regular readers of **Books for Keeps**, of course. They got an advance glimpse of what was in store 18 months ago in our May 1987 Authorgraph which ended with the prediction, 'what better stimulus could there be for the

quirky, arresting talent of Anthony Browne than Lewis Carroll's **Alice's Adventures in Wonderland**?' No-one, though, could have anticipated just how propitious this pairing would turn out to be. Anthony's **Alice**, we feel, is pretty nearly definitive. For us the question is not so much 'is this as good as the original version by Sir John Tenniel?' as 'is this even *better* than Tenniel?' You don't believe us? Well, it's a comparison every **Alice** admirer must follow through for themselves since in our view these sharp, funny, gloriously surreal yet admirably restrained pictures will bear the closest scrutiny. And if you're *not* an **Alice** admirer, turn to page 28 of this issue for an entirely coincidental endorsement by Bernard Ashley. 'I was never an **Alice-in-Wonderland** fan,' says Bernard, 'it was all too whimsical and clever for me.' Until this version, it seems, Bernard's response, the Emil panel is pretty sure, will be shared by umpteen others. ●

Alice's Adventures in Wonderland, Lewis Carroll, ill. Anthony Browne, Julia MacRae, 0 86203 324 1, £12.95

Can It Be True?, Susan Hill, ill. Angela Barrett, Hamish Hamilton, 0 241 12155 8, £6.95

Jolly Roger, Colin McNaughton, Walker, 0 7445 1011 2, £8.95

The Mighty Slide, Allan Ahlberg, ill. Charlotte Voake, Viking Kestrel, 0 670 81677 9, £5.95

Black Beauty, Anna Sewell, ill. Charles Keeping, Gollancz, 0 575 03924 8, £8.95

Can't You Sleep, Little Bear?, Martin Waddell, ill. Barbara Firth, Walker, 0 7445 0796 0, £6.95



The Kurt Maschler Award, established in 1982 in memory of Erich Kastner and Walter Trier (the author and illustrator of **Emil and the Detectives**), is now most frequently referred to as 'the Emil' with reference to the bronze statuette of Emil which is given as part of the prize. The award is given for 'a work of imagination in the children's field in which text and illustration are of excellence and so presented that each enhances and yet balances the other'.

If Walter De La Mare had been alive I would have rung him up and said ...

"Read this book of poems called **SALFORD ROAD** by GARETH OWEN at once! It's original, beautiful, serious, funny, real and imaginative. Nothing quite like it has been done before."

So wrote the poet Patric Dickenson.

To coincide with the paperback publication of **SALFORD ROAD** by Lions a cassette has been made available of Gareth Owen reading a selection of his own poems from both **SALFORD ROAD** and **SONG OF THE CITY**.

Gareth Owen has visited hundreds of schools and has delighted countless children with his readings. This tape means that many more children will be able to share the experience of hearing the poet read his own work.



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ACE READS

JENNY NIMMO

The Snow Spider

'A heart-warming fantasy' (*Guardian*), Winner of the Smarties Prize, and now a magical TV series. £1.75



KATIE WALES

**The Creepy Crawly
Joke Book**

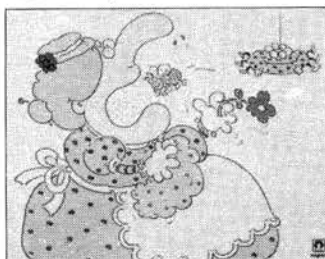
*Hickory, dickory, dock...
Three mice ran up the clock.
The clock struck one... The
other three got off with
minor injuries!* £1.50



**COLIN and
JACQUI HAWKINS**

**I Know an Old Lady
Who Swallowed a Fly**

Charming versions – with
flaps to lift, revealing all
kinds of horrors – of much-
loved rhymes. £3.50



MAGNET

SOUND & VISION

AN UPDATE OF TV, FILM & RADIO INFORMATION

The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe

C S Lewis, Collins, 0 00 183180 1, £6.95;
Lions, 0 00 671663 6, £2.25 pbk; Lions,
00 673431 6, £2.95 TV Tie-in pbk with eight
pages of photographs

This major serialization runs from Sunday,
13th November at 4.15pm for six weeks (see
opposite).

Simon and the Holiday Club

Margaret Stuart Barry, Collins,
0 00 184922 0, £4.95; Lions, 0 00 673262 3,
£1.75 pbk

To be screened by BBC1 starting on 14th
November, twice a week (Mondays and
Tuesdays) for six weeks at 4.20pm.
Elizabeth Spriggs as the witch, and Hugh
Pollard as Simon.

The Nature of the Beast

Janni Howker, Julia MacRae, 0 86203 194 X,
£6.95; Lions, 0 00 672582 1, £1.95 pbk

We've now seen the film at a London
preview but will hold over a possible review
and interview with Janni Howker, who also
wrote the screenplay, until the January issue
when the film is likely to have a general
release date. Meanwhile what we do have
are one or two local openings which, if
you're within striking distance, make it well
worth a night out:

24th November – Accrington at Unit 4 (nice
touch this as most of the filming was in and
around Accrington itself)

25th November – Salford at the Quays,
Sheffield, Milton Keynes, Cannon
Haymarket and also Tottenham Court
Road

The Snow Spider

Jenny Nimmo, Methuen, 0 416 54330 0,
£6.50; Magnet, 0 416 06492 2, £1.75 pbk

This Smarties Prize winner is to be
networked on ITV from 27th November at
4.30pm in four 30-minute episodes. It stars
Sian Phillips as Nain and Ossian Roberts as
Gwyn.

The Watch House

Robert Westall, Goodchild, 0 86391 053 X,
£6.95; Puffin Plus, 0 14 03.1285 4, £2.25 pbk

The BBC have this scheduled for six
half-hour slots starting December '88.

The Thief

Jan Needle, Hamish Hamilton,
0 241 12607 X, £7.50; Puffin, 0 14 03.2905 6,
no price as yet, both to be published in
May 1989

Scheduled by ITV for late '88 in a one-hour
episode plus again on Middle English
(Thames TV) in four 15-minute episodes.

The New Adventures of William Tell

Anthony Horowitz, Puffin, 0 14 03.2353 8,
£1.99 (December 1988)

Coming from ITV early in 1989 in eighteen
30-minute episodes.

The Witches

Roald Dahl, Cape, 0 224 02165 6, £7.95;
Puffin, 0 14 03.1730 9, £2.50 pbk

Postponed until next Spring.

The BFG

Roald Dahl, Cape, 0 224 02040 4, £7.95;
Puffin, 0 14 03.1597 7, £2.50 pbk

A feature film coming some time next year.

The Wolves of Willoughby Chase

Joan Aiken, Puffin, 0 14 03.0310 3,
£1.95 pbk

A feature film for Spring '89.

Pippi Longstocking

Astrid Lindgren, OUP, 0 19 271097 4, £3.25;
Puffin, 0 14 03.0894 6, £1.95 pbk

Filmed as *The New Adventures of...* this is
another Spring-time feature to watch out for.

The TV Adventures of Mr Majeika

Humphrey Carpenter, Puffin, 0 14 03.2664 2,
£1.95 pbk

ITV have this provisionally scheduled for six
30-minute episodes this coming Spring.

Marianne Dreams

Catherine Storr, Puffin, 0 14 03.0209 3,
£1.95 pbk

A feature-film, retitled for the screen as
Paperhouse, now postponed until Spring '89.

Woof!

Allan Ahlberg, Viking Kestrel,
0 670 80832 6, £6.95; Puffin, 0 14 03.1996 4,
£1.75 pbk

Four 30-minute episodes with Liza Goddard
from ITV. No transmission dates yet.

Granpa

John Burningham, Cape, 0 224 02279 2,
£5.95; Picture Puffin, 0 14 050.841 4,
£2.25 pbk

By the makers of *The Snowman* and *When
the Wind Blows* this has disappeared from
the listings. We'll keep our ears and eyes
open.

JACKANORY

– advance listings for this evergreen
Spring-term BBC1 series. We, and indeed
the Jackanory team itself, still don't know
their final running order but this is what we
can look forward to:

Tumbleweed, Dick King-Smith, Gollancz,
0 575 03975 2, £5.95; Puffin, 0 14 03.2547 6,
£1.99

The Best-kept Secret, Emily Rodda, Angus
& Robertson, 0 207 15809 6, £6.95

The Monday Sheepdog, Ivy Baker, Angus &
Robertson, 0 207 15503 8, £5.95

Matilda, Roald Dahl, Cape, 0 224 02572 4,
£8.50

Paddy on the Island, Ursula Moray
Williams, Andersen, 0 86264 186 1, £5.95

Alice's Adventures in Wonderland, Lewis
Carroll, various publishers

The Whipping Boy, Sid Fleischman,
Methuen, 0 416 12512 3, £5.95; Magnet,
0 416 08812 0, paperback due early 1989

Danny the Champion of the World, Roald
Dahl, Cape, 0 224 01201 0, £6.95; Puffin,
0 14 03.0912 8, £1.95 pbk

Ten in a Bed, Allan Ahlberg, Granada,
0 246 12586 1, £3.50 pbk

Jeremiah in the Dark Woods, Janet and
Allan Ahlberg, Viking Kestrel,
0 670 40637 6, £5.95; Young Lions,
0 00 671640 7, £1.75 pbk

The last three are repeat programmes.

New Maps for Narnia . . .

Julia Eccleshare on An Old Favourite in a new guise



C S Lewis's **The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe** has long filled a central role in children's fiction as both a classic of undoubted literary merit and as an enduring children's favourite. It's already been adapted for stage and tape. Now it's been transformed into a major television production.

Adapting a book of this quality and kind, lying deep in the fantasy tradition, is no mean feat. The producer, Paul Stone, explains: 'It is only comparatively recently, within the last five years, that this sort of book *could* be adapted for television. For it to work, it's essential that the fantasy is convincing in its naturalism and it is only since the development of sophisticated computer graphics which allow Colour Separation Overlay that this has been possible.' The use of many layers of film shot on top of each other means that time-changes and unnatural movement, such as Aslan's flying, are now technically achievable and visually powerful.

But the BBC's adaptation hasn't come about just to prove the technical wonders of computer graphics. Paul Stone embarked on the project because of his own enthusiasm for the story and, indeed, the series of Narnia books. 'The Narnia stories are exceptionally exciting as well as being highly visual. Their special appeal is that magic can happen out of commonplace and they give children a chance to discover the wonderment of things beyond. The good versus evil theme is one that lies at the heart of many fantasies but it is particularly delicately represented in **The Lion, the**

Witch and the Wardrobe by the clever use of the Lion, Aslan, to represent good, though he is also traditionally the symbol of strength and power, while evil is represented not by some black or witchy hag but, rather, by a glittering white queen.' The argument as to how far the struggle between good and evil is specifically Christian in **The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe** still remains open to debate but this adaptation is not plugging a specifically Christian line. The good of Aslan as opposed to the evil of the White Witch can be interpreted far more broadly here.

Paul Stone's understanding of the stories and his commitment to representing them faithfully, but imaginatively, is absolute. The adapter, Alan Seymour, has kept 'true to the spirit and, as far as possible, to the letter' of the dialogue and the child characters - Peter, Susan, Edmund and Lucy - have remained firmly in their own period. As Paul Stone says, 'this means that by today's standards their behaviour is sexist in that the boys take part in the battles while the girls only watch but that is how the book was written and it would be wrong to destroy or change those patterns.' A few details have been changed to bring the book nearer to the present day, such as taking out the boys owning guns. This seems to have been quite acceptable for a child then, but is much less so today.

With so much enthusiasm, thought and care going into it, television's version of **The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe** looks set to provide excellent entertainment for those who already know the book as well as

introducing it to a new audience. So confident of its success is the BBC that it has already planned a six-episode combined adaptation of **Prince Caspian** and **The Voyage of the 'Dawn Treader'** for 1989 followed by **The Silver Chair** in 1990.

Given the ever-debated issue of whether television is snatching readers from books, I asked Rosemary Sandberg, publishing director of Collins children's paperbacks which publishes the Narnia books, what she felt about the new television adaptation. Her reply was unequivocally positive. 'This project is being done with all the BBC's special care. And there can be none better. Paul Stone's version of **The Box of Delights** showed us just how well magic can be shown on television and I am sure that he will be just as successful with **The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe**. The special effects will certainly make it very exciting to watch.'

Of course, the Narnia books have never lacked readers. They've been exceptionally popular ever since publication. Clearly, a six-part television series will return them to the limelight though, so, to tie-in and capitalise, Fontana are publishing a new large-format paperback edition with a TV cover and eight pages of photographs.

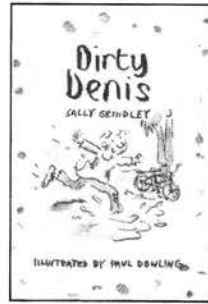
Altogether, whether on page or screen, Narnia is back on the map. ●

Julia Eccleshare is a freelance broadcaster and journalist. She is the current compiler of Book Trust's **Children's Books of the Year**.

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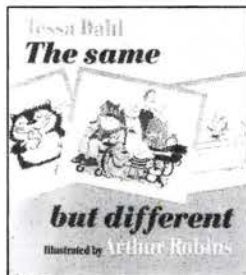
Dirty Denis
Sally Grindley
Ill. by Paul Dowling
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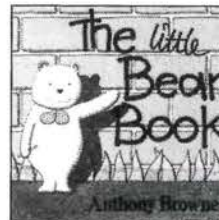
Alistair Underwater
Marilyn Sadler
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Lorna Kent
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The Same But Different
Tessa Dahl
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Anthony Browne
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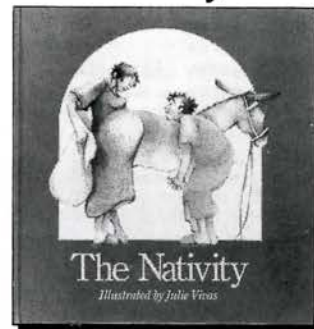


Andy: An Alaskan Tale

Susan Welsh-Smith

Based on the true story of an Old English Sheep-Dog who arrives at an Eskimo village in the Arctic. People and dogs are delightfully portrayed by well-known Alaskan artist, Rie Muñoz.

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FROM SANTA'S SACK

Which books, from *any* currently in print, would you give as a Christmas gift to your favourite toddler, in-between and teenager if you could guarantee they'd never set eyes on a particular title before?

This is the question we put to a selection of authors and illustrators – and don't think we weren't nervous about it. Would they *all* choose **Where the Wild Things Are**, **The Wind in the Willows** and **Treasure Island**? And even if they didn't, were we just setting up an annotated booklist. Future Curriculum. Planners for the Use of? Perish the thought. On the other hand, would *none* of them mention the classics we know and love, thereby perpetrating mere up-to-date-ness? Perish *that* thought, too.

In the event, we needn't have worried. Though we gave a completely free hand to each contributor, there were no duplications whatsoever. Better still, the mix of old-to-new was pretty nearly perfect – from the classics mentioned above (all of which got a mention) to a couple of books still hot from the press. Even poetry, thanks to our precautionary measure of including a couple of poets, got a look-in.

Altogether, Santa seemed to have called early on **Books for Keeps**. His present was confirmation of what we'd hoped would be the case – that quality will out and that choosing is *personal*, there being no necessary contradiction between the two. So, having laid out this bonanza of Absolute Favourites for everyone's enjoyment, what next? Obvious, of course. We contact:

- a) The Publishers to solicit complimentary copies for a Good Cause
- b) Santa to deliver them.

The first turned out to be easy. The publishers concerned were as generous as we'd expected and soon a consignment of all the above titles will be arriving at Booth Hall Children's Hospital, Manchester. We'd like some help with the second, though. If necessary, we are prepared to resort to the good old GPO but does anyone know where we can get hold of Santa?

Quentin Blake



Three books chosen mainly for the pictures. I'm not sure that they fit properly into the age groups; in fact, I really only know that a 55-year-old likes them.

First, Ludwig Bemelmans' **Madeline**; partly because it was first published 50 years ago next year, and still comes up smiling. It doesn't come up quite so smiley in the Puffin paperback, which is too small; the hardback shows off the charm and its format and gives Bemelmans room to push the paint about.



The words are beautifully judged and the drawings have a sort of enthusiasm and eagerness for place and moment. The rain is swishing down over Notre Dame, but Bemelmans also characteristically notices the crank on Madeline's bed.

Second, **Little Sophie and Lanky Flop** by Els Pelgrom, because this is one of the only books translated into English which has illustrations by The Tjong Khing, who is

very good indeed. He has a natural and sympathetic sense of humour, but though these drawings are fun they are also atmospheric and full of humanity. There is a richness of light and texture about them, unusual in black and white drawings, that makes you want to go back and look at them again.

I'd really like my third choice to be an illustrated novel of history. It may just be that I don't know enough about this kind of thing, but it seems to me that with a few exceptions – Keeping, Ambrus and some others – this is a neglected art. Possibly publishers aren't willing to pay for it any more; possibly children with lots of films and television in their diet don't really want it. While I'm searching for the right book I'll give instead one of the **Little Nicholas** titles. Children know the author (Gosciny) because he's the writer of **Asterix** – though this is a different world altogether, the everyday world of a French schoolboy. It's very funny and well observed and, enormously in its favour, has illustrations by the incomparable Sempé, who is one of the best cartoonists in France or any other country. Or – since our young recipient as a good European is already well advanced in French – why not the original **Le Petit Nicholas**, from which can be learnt useful phrases such as 'le chou-chou de la maitresse' – 'complètement dingue'. On va se rigoler.

John Agard



My Christmas choice for the teenagers would be James Berry's **A Thief in the Village**, which evokes a strong atmosphere of his rural Jamaica. The stories are rich with character and adventure, and strong on authenticity of detail that lingers, like the coconut drink spiced with pimento berries. I'm struck by how often characters in the book yearn for simple things. The girl Becky would like a bicycle; Delroy would like a mouth-organ; Gustus is planning to sell his bunch of bananas to buy shoes so he can go on school outings. These yearnings for ordinary things are made all the more touching, when we consider how children in richer countries take material gifts for granted. Told in James Berry's individual prose style that bears echoes of his poetry, the book was awarded last year's Smarties prize.

The feeling of the tropics is carried over into my next choice. **Come on into my Tropical Garden**, a collection of poems by Grace Nichols, a winner of the Commonwealth Poetry Prize. In this, her first collection for children, she writes with an affectionate fascination for the hinterland of her native Guyana – the parakeets, the howler monkeys, the rain forest hugging deep secrets. An eerie beauty pervades some of the poems as in

*'Play moonlight
and the red crabs dance
their scuttle-foot dance
on the mud-packed beach.'*



That kind of endearing evocation of things tropical makes one think of the kind of joyous feelings Charles Causley brings to things Cornish.

Now for my third choice, which is for the youngest age group, and the most difficult to choose for. There are so many attractive picture books around, that quite honestly I don't know which one to choose. Instead, I opted for Julius Lester's retelling of 48 **Brer Rabbit** tales.

(John Agard continued)

Like nursery rhymes, which follow us into adulthood, these are stories that children can return to as they grow older. To begin with, parents can choose one to read as a bedtime story, as most of them are quite short and Lester's prose has a strong oral sound-quality. Try saying this, for instance: 'He diggy, diggy, diggy, diggy, but no meat there. He diggy, diggy, diggy, diggy, but no meat there.'

It doesn't matter if you're a Yorkshire mum or a Brummy dad, try reading the stories with your own regional accent, as Lester advises – 'if you love the tales, and tell it with love, the tale will communicate.' In English literature the rabbit is seen as a cute, innocuous creature. I think a child will be intrigued, even consoled, that the little rabbit can also be an indefatigable trickster.

So don't blame me, if Brer Rabbit jumps out of your Christmas stocking.

Chris Powling

Not Now, Bernard by David McKee



Given the sheer wealth of picture books in print, this was the toughest choice of the lot. In the end, though, I opted for an old favourite. It's a book that brings matching ear-to-ear grins to every grown-up and child-in-the-lap as Bernard gets the brush-off from both Mum and Dad. A brilliant image of parent-child relationships laid out in words and pictures of an eye-opening simplicity, **Not Now, Bernard** shows David McKee's droll, deadpan humour at its very best – and that's as good as droll, deadpan humour can get.

The BFG by Roald Dahl

Like all Dahl's best work this is a script-for-the-voice, best appreciated in performance. I'll never forget reading it to 250 entranced Juniors – the younger ones hooked on the atmosphere and incident, the older ones on the language: snozzcumbers, whizzpoppers and all. It's gloriously funny (the BFG's attempt at a whizzpopper in the presence of H M The Queen had two youngsters wetting themselves with mirth) and strangely moving since the title character is simultaneously gigantic and a runt-of-the-litter. As usual, Dahl has it both ways. Even some critics agreed with the instant verdict of the kids: it's a classic.

Treasure Island by Robert Louis Stevenson

For me, this section was no contest. **Treasure Island** is the best adventure story for older children ever written. Once encountered, who can forget Blind Pew or Jim in the apple-barrel or Israel Hands climbing the mast or . . . well, pick your own recorded highlight. My own daughter spent days singing 'Yo ho ho and a bottle of rum' after we'd read alternate chapters together – and, just like me when I was her age, was transfixed by the realisation that a character like Long John Silver can be both evil and infinitely glamorous. Being very much a book of its time, furthermore, **Treasure Island** is also racist, classist, sexist and God-knows-what-ist which gives you a handy excuse to proceed at once to the perfect antidote, Bob Leeson's brilliant sequel, **Silver's Revenge**.

Bernard Ashley



I've come a year late to the book I'd most like to give an Infant this Christmas – **Animalia** by Graeme Base – but catching up with it has been a great pleasure. An important attribute for a book in this age group is being big enough for two laps, for sharing: and if the sharing is to be genuine the book has to have something other than reflected pleasure in it for the adult. **Animalia** will be grabbed by both parties – with its alliterative artwork, its pages and double spreads of invention in a variety of styles, and its game of I-Spy leading to what the dreaded SRA people would be tempted to call 'word power boosting potential'. The real point is that after looking through this book the world is seen through new eyes – of the closely observing kind.

I was never an **Alice in Wonderland** fan, it was all too whimsical and clever for me. Yet not to know it is to have a vital piece of culture missing – like not knowing The Lord's Prayer at Christian weddings and funerals. Now here's a marvellous way for Juniors to drink from the labelled bottle: by receiving the Anthony Browne-illustrated edition. The Junior mind may not understand Browne's allusions all the time any more than it will understand Carroll's, but it will be somehow aware of being in the presence of an artist it will never forget.

A jump to the top end of the age group for the Secondary gift book. Linda Hoy's **Kiss** has the sort of relevance to growing up and to the way society is run that would seem to exclude any possibility of it being a good read. But try putting it down. Unusually organised with twin narrators and a creative line in typography, it's a one-session book: not short, but drawing an internal power from the perceptive way in which identity and sexuality are painfully explored, yet compulsively exposed to the reader. Beautifully constructed; satisfying; a male book in many respects, but don't let any young person you know grow up without reading it.

Philippa Pearce



For me, it's only a question of *which* Beatrix Potter. To the very youngest infant, I'd give **The Story of Miss Moppet**. It's so elegantly simple: mouse teases kitten and, unwary, is caught; then kitten teases mouse and, unwary, allows him to escape. This is for reading aloud, letting the few words and ravishing pictures speak for themselves. No worrying, please, about what the listener will not worry about: what is a bell-rope? why should a supposed neuralgic tie her face up in a blue duster (with a hole in it – *never forget the hole*). A Potter for beginners.



The Iron Man was Ted Hughes' bedtime story for his children: 'a story in five nights'. It's easy to read aloud; also easy to read to oneself. On the first night the Iron Man is scattered in broken parts along a sea-shore.

Nine Nautical Newts Navigating Near Norway



From **Animalia**.



From the cover of **Kiss**.



An iron hand manages to pick up an iron eye: 'Now the hand could see . . . Slowly the hand crept over the stones, searching.' I know nothing more impossible, nothing more credible than the Iron Man's bit-by-bit re-assembly of himself. Then comes the boy Hogarth, who tempts the Iron Man's appetite for metal and enlists his aid against a hostile Space-Being. And we end with the music of the spheres.

I used to catch my bus to work in London on the site of a thrilling moonlight meeting: 'There, in the middle of the broad, bright high road – there, as if it had that moment sprung out of the earth or dropped from heaven – stood the figure of a solitary Woman, dressed from head to foot in white garments . . .' To anyone over, say, twelve, who could sink teeth into a big book as a dog does with a meaty bone, I'd give **The Woman in White** by Wilkie Collins, a friend of Dickens. It's one of the earliest and best of detective mysteries.

Robert Leeson

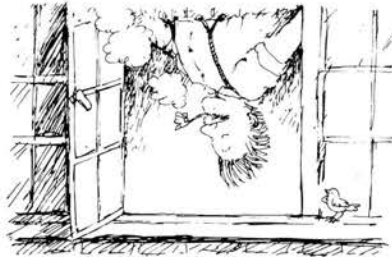


Ben's Baby by Michael Foreman

Young Ben wants a baby for his birthday. And though his parents seem a little astonished at his request, they are, as it happens, about to oblige him. It's a long wait, but the months pass as softly as Michael Foreman's colours, in his big double page, all-embracing pictures. Ben's life is full of small reassuring things, like listening to the baby in Mum's tum. By the last page there's the baby and Ben's taken charge. It's the kind of book which the child who gets it may still be hanging on to when they're grown.

Harriet and the Flying Teachers by Martin Waddell

At Slow Street Primary there is barbed wire round the staff room – a desperate attempt to create a Harriet-free-zone. Harriet Smith is the terror of both teachers and pupils alike, in a funny way, one hastens to add. Her foes among the pupils rally into an anti-Harriet League, with the double aim of destroying her and the teachers as well by putting up the idea that Harriet shall do the refreshments for the Grand Feast at term



end. How Harriet responds makes a very affectionate and entertaining picture of life at a matey school.

My Love, My Love by Rosa Guy

A story of love to make most 'love stories' seem like pale imitations. It is Rosa Guy's translation (I think that must be the word) of the story of the Mermaid, into the world and imagery of a Caribbean island, where Desiree the peasant girl saves the life of a young man, pleading with the jealous gods for him. They have their revenge, for she is granted her wish, is taken into the palatial home, becomes his 'love' and then loses him again and is excluded from her own paradise. The uncrossable divide between other-world creature and human in the fairy story, is given flesh and blood reality in our own divided world. A present for a serious teenager.

Anthony Browne



The book I would give any infant is Sendak's **Where the Wild Things Are**. This is the perfect picture book, a superb combination of words, pictures and, vital in a picture book, the gap in-between. This gap, to be completed by the child reader, is the understanding that the Wild Things are Max's own creation, and that he has the power to control them. The subtle use of clues in the book – the creature hanging from the washing line, Max's own drawing of a Wild Thing, wait for children to discover them on subsequent readings and thereby discover new and deeper meanings to the story.

I would give to a junior school child **The Mysteries of Harris Burdick** by Chris Van Allsburg. Allsburg is hardly known in this country, and is, I think, one of the very best picture book artists. This book purports to be a series of illustrations to 14 stories left at a children's book publisher by the mysterious Harris Burdick. All that is left of the stories are the titles and one enigmatic line from each. The artwork, as always with Allsburg, is brilliant and strange, and the crucial gap between the pictures and the text is enormous but irresistible.

My choice for a secondary school child would be **The Nature of the Beast** by Janni Howker. This is a very strong, rich and



'He had warned her about the book. Now it was too late.' From **The Mysteries of Harris Burdick**.

complex novel only partly about the effects of the closure of a mill in a Northern town and the subsequent unemployment. It is also partly about a dark beast roaming the countryside killing livestock and terrorising the community. In the end the beast seems to be inside the angry, frustrated Billy, and the last lines of the book, 'I'm going to take over where the Beast left off. They've seen nothing yet!', had me shivering.

Dick King-Smith



When you're learning the business of reading, pictures in books are tremendously important, and funny pictures catch the eye. Few people draw funny pictures better than Tony Ross.

The idea behind **Oscar Got the Blame** is, like all the best ideas, a simple one. Everything that goes wrong in Oscar's house is actually

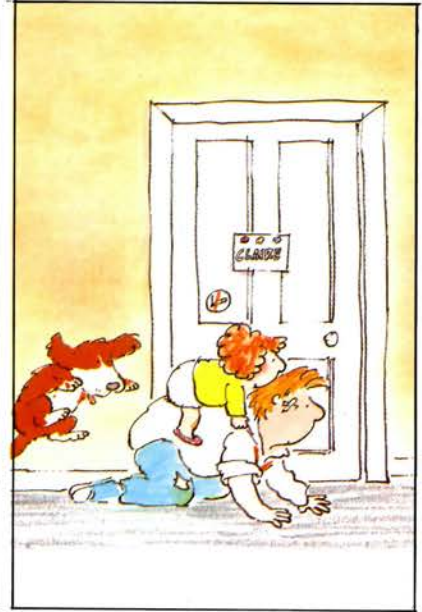


Michael Rosen



Crusher is Coming by Bob Graham

This is a brand new delight and so shunts out of the limelight some of my old favourites like David McKee and Anthony Browne.



'Hey Crusher, you don't *have* to.'

Peter tells Mum that Crusher is coming home for tea, so he doesn't want to be kissed and he doesn't want toddler Claire hanging around. He clears out all his little soft animals. When Crusher arrives, football boots round his neck and plaster on his forehead, it's baby Claire he's more interested in mucking in with. People think that non-sexist books means books about girls; this is a non-sexist book about boys.

The Tailor of Gloucester by Beatrix Potter

I've assumed we could choose favourite books from our childhood. Looking at my old battered copy brings back memories of how I felt when I was read this. As with a lot of Beatrix Potter there's a kernel of terror that those evil Ladybird people are trying to excise. Get the original. The children might like it too.

Sandburg Treasury: Prose and Poetry for Young People

Anyone over the age of 13 and beginning to get really hooked on poetry would find lots here to get stuck into. For me he's the finest poet of the cities. He wrote about buildings in cities, people in cities, and attempted huge montage pieces of what people say.

the fault (Oscar feels sure) of his friend Billy. When I was about five, I had an imaginary friend called Paddy, with whom I held long intellectual conversations, but it never occurred to me to make him a scapegoat. Fat lot of good it would have been anyway, judging by Oscar's lack of success. Oscar always gets the blame, and Tony Ross gets the praise for a picture book to make everyone smile. My friend Katy Ross (and her imaginary friend Mandy) made the end papers.

The first story in **Clever Polly and the Stupid Wolf** sums them both up beautifully. The wolf – a literal fellow – wants to eat Polly, but she – a resourceful child – persuades him

(Dick King-Smith continued)

to have three helpings of pie for starters, and he is then too full. A week later, six slices of chocolate cake do the trick, and later still the stupid creature is invited to sample some toffee in the making which burns his mouth.

Catherine Storr pits Polly against the wolf in round after round of this contest, but Polly is always ahead on points. We leave the poor wolf pulling the petals from daisies (with difficulty – his paws are not ideal for the job) and, instead of 'She loves me, she loves me not', reciting 'I get her, I don't get her.' There are thousands of daisies on her lawn, clever Polly tells him with satisfaction, and hundreds of thousands more when he's finished there.

My third choice is also the story of a wolf, but it is set a far howl from Polly's cosy suburban streets. This is Jack London's classic **White Fang**, first published in 1907, that begins in the pitiless frozen North and ends in the sunshine of California. My own copy – of 1933 (even then a 32nd edition) – is still, just, in one piece after the attentions of myself, my children and my senior grandchildren. Between those battered covers lies the saga of one heroic beast and the general inhumanity of humans towards him.



It is not a story for the squeamish, for **White Fang** is cruelly misused, but at the nadir of his fortunes, at the end of the great fight with the bulldog Cherokee, at last one good man comes to his aid. In due course **White Fang** repays the debt, almost losing his own life in so doing. Almost, but not quite. I do like happy endings, don't you?

Shirley Hughes



Mr Gumpy's Outing by John Burningham

The best picture books, like onions, are simple in shape, easy to hold and hide their layers of skill in a satisfyingly unified whole.



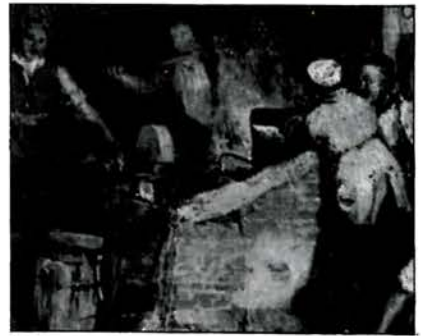
John Burningham encompasses all this with effortless ease. **Mr Gumpy's** progress, in an increasingly crowded boat, is a classic one; the language contemporary. A beautifully balanced layout, designed by Jan Pienkowski, offsets large coloured plates against smaller hatched sepia drawings which act as a commentary. Children who are not yet talking can join in with animal noises, older ones can learn to pick out the words. The build-up to the big splash ends, as is proper, with a lovely tea.

The Wind in the Willows by Kenneth Grahame

In this pre-1914 arcadia it is the characters who inspire permanent affection. We admire Rat's gentlemanly decency but, deep down, it is with the timid Mole that we most readily identify, or even at times Toad himself. The story touches powerful chords: the desire to run off, to be a gypsy or a wayfarer, which all children need to do in their imagination, and the equally strong pull towards home, to having a cosy little place all kitted out as you would like it.

Ernest Shepard's line illustrations, so deceptively slight, get nearer than any others to the lyrical heart of the book. No-one could handle this kind of anthropomorphism as well as he.

Great Expectations by Charles Dickens



From the terror of the opening graveyard scene Dickens' narrative power commands completely. In one paragraph he can turn from high comedy to the dark undertow of the plot. Brilliant characterisation apart, this is a novel of graphically evoked places: the forge on the edge of the marshes; Miss Havisham's fusty, shuttered room with its rotting wedding cake; the rickety stairs and courts of Barnard's Inn; Mr Wemmick's castle. Pictures in strong chiaroscuro which stay in the mind forever. Edit it as you read aloud if you choose. Rosemary Manning's abridged version from Collins but sadly out of print is excellent if you can get hold of it. No older child should be allowed to miss this story. ●

Details of books chosen

FOR INFANTS

Animalia, Graeme Base, Macmillan, 0 333 45444 8, £7.50

Ben's Baby, Michael Foreman, Andersen, 0 86264 175 6, £5.95

Crusher is Coming, Bob Graham, Collins, 0 00 195602 7, £5.95

Madeline, Ludwig Bemelmans, Deutsch, 0 233 95545 3, £4.95; Picture Puffin, 0 14 050.198 3, £1.95 pbk

Mr Gumpy's Outing, John Burningham, Cape, 0 224 61909 8, £5.50; Picture Puffin, 0 14 050.254 8, £1.95 pbk

Not Now, Bernard, David McKee, Andersen, 0 905478 7 1, £5.95; Beaver, 0 09 924050 5, £2.50 pbk (also available in Bengali, Gujarati and Urdu dual-language versions from Ingham Yates, £5.95 each)

Oscar Got the Blame, Tony Ross, Andersen, 0 86264 180 2, £4.95

The Story of Miss Moppet, Beatrix Potter, Warne, 0 7232 3480 9, £3.50

The Tales of Uncle Remus and Adventures of Brer Rabbit, Julius Lester, ill. Jerry Pinkney, Bodley Head, 0 370 31089 6, £9.95

Where the Wild Things Are, Maurice Sendak, Bodley Head, 0 370 00772 7, £7.95; Picture Puffin, 0 14 050.031 6, £2.95 pbk

FOR JUNIORS

Alice's Adventures in Wonderland, Lewis Carroll, ill. Anthony Browne, Julia MacRae, 0 86203 324 1, £12.95

The BFG, Roald Dahl, ill. Quentin Blake, Cape, 0 224 02040 4, £7.95; Puffin, 0 14 03.1597 7, £2.50 pbk

Clever Polly and the Stupid Wolf, Catherine Storr, Young Puffin, 0 14 03.0312 X, £1.75 pbk

Come on into my Tropical Garden, Grace Nichols, ill. Caroline Binch, A & C Black, 0 7136 2989 4, £5.95

Harriet and the Flying Teachers, Martin Waddell, ill. Mark Burgess, Blackie, 0 216 92239 9, £6.95

The Iron Man, Ted Hughes, ill. Andrew Davidson, Faber, 0 571 13675 3, £7.95; 0 571 13677 X, £1.95 pbk

Little Sophie and Lanky Flop, Els Pelgrom, ill. The Tjong Khing, Cape, 0 224 02512 0, £7.95

The Mysteries of Harris Burdick, Chris Van Allsburg, Andersen, 0 86264 101 2, £5.95

The Tailor of Gloucester, Beatrix Potter, Warne, 0 7232 3462 0, £3.50

The Wind in the Willows, Kenneth Grahame, ill. Ernest Shepard, various versions in hardback and paperback from Methuen

FOR OLDER READERS

Great Expectations, Charles Dickens, various publishers

Kiss, Linda Hoy, Walker, 0 7445 0826 6, £8.95

My Love, My Love, Rosa Guy, Virago, 0 86068 804 6, £2.95 pbk

The Nature of the Beast, Janni Howker, Julia MacRae, 0 86203 194 X, £6.95; Lions, 0 00 672582 1, £1.95 pbk

Nicholas and the Gang Again, 0 09 939740 4

Nicholas at Large, 0 09 939730 7

Nicholas on Holiday, 0 09 939750 1

Rene Goscinny and J J Sempe, Beaver, 95p each pbk

Sandburg Treasury: Prose and Poetry for Young People, Carl Sandburg, Harcourt Brace, 0 15 270180 X, £12.50

A Thief in the Village, James Berry, Hamish Hamilton, 0 241 12011 X, £6.95

Treasure Island, Robert Louis Stevenson, various publishers

White Fang, Jack London, Puffin Classics, 0 14 035.045 4, £2.25 pbk

The Woman in White, Wilkie Collins, Penguin Classics, 0 14 043.096 2, £2.95 pbk

AUTUMN READING FROM FABER



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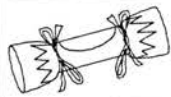
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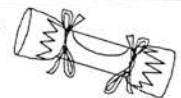
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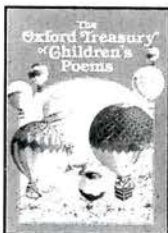
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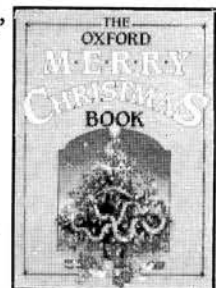


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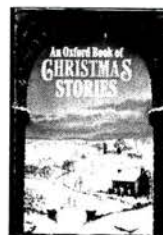
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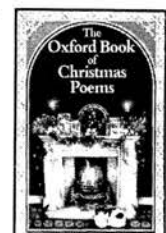
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BOOKS FOR KEEPS NEWS



The Federation of Children's Book Groups



'A Tale is a tale . . . however it's told . . .'

21st Annual Conference

31st March – 2nd April 1989 at Brighton Polytechnic, Falmer, East Sussex

Entitled *A Tale is a tale . . . however it's told . . .*, this lively gathering will be considering the many ways of storytelling, from the oral tradition to television, with the underlying theme that the quality of the story and its telling are all-important. Speakers will include Celia Berridge, Berlie Doherty, Grace Hallworth, Rosemary Stones and Wes Magee. A full residential weekend for non-members is £65, for members £60. Daily rates are also available. Closing date: 3rd February 1989. Further information from: Diana Rogers, 48 South Way, Lewes, East Sussex BN7 1LY (tel: 0273 474964).

BfK Annual Subscription Price Increase

For the past eight years we have managed to keep our price increases more or less bang on the prevailing rate of inflation. This coming year, 1989, we are putting the annual subscription up by 16% which is well above the current rate of inflation for two reasons. Just over a third is taken up with the normal rises in the costs of production and postage; the rest is to help us produce a better, larger magazine. At the moment we average 28 pages per issue. In 1989 we shall attempt to average 32 pages, perhaps the year after another four pages. The subscription rates therefore for the coming calendar year are as follows:

UK Annual Subscription: £8.40
(Single copy £1.40)

Europe and surface worldwide: £12.00
(Single copy £2.00)

Airmail Rates on application

These new prices will come into effect from 1st January 1989.

Survey of Comics and Magazines for Children and Young People

'Only 17% of young people read books for pleasure at the age of 15 . . . 98% read comics and/or magazines.' So says a survey (quoting other sources) produced by Camden Libraries and Arts Department for its

own use and which looked at over 160 publications covering a wide spectrum of ages, interests and cultures. Includes reviews, recommendations, publishers and circulation figures. Available from: The Children and Young People's Librarian, Swiss Cottage Library, 88 Avenue Road, London NW3 3HA; £4.95 (inc. p&p); cheques and POs made payable to the London Borough of Camden.

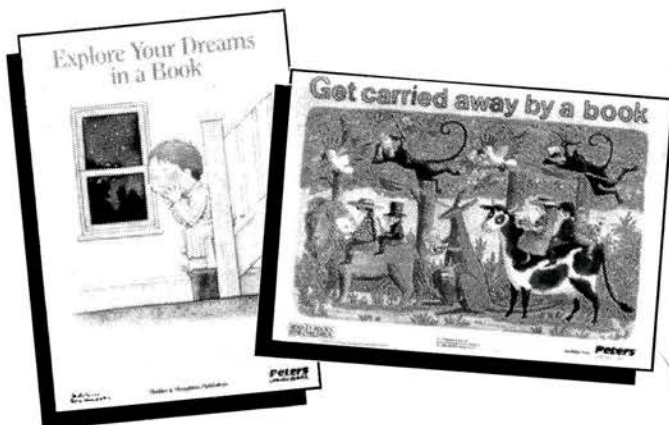
Sotheby's Sale of Illustrated Books, Children's Books and Related Drawings

Sotheby's, London (tel: 01-408 5168)
1st-2nd December 1988

Not, we suspect, for us ordinary punters but fascinating nonetheless to report, Sotheby's expect this auction to fetch in excess of £250,000! There's a private American collection of English and American children's books of about 350 titles (valued at £130,000-£160,000) which include the first account in English of *The Pied Piper* dated 1605, a number of mint-condition first editions including an English version, dated 1848, of *Shock-Headed Peter*. Besides these there are also drawings by Tenniel (the original illustrator of *Alice*), Ardizzone and Kit Williams (*Masquerade*). Let us know how your biddings go.



Children's Book Promotion Posters



From Peters Library Service, 28-32 Thorp Street, Birmingham B5 4AX (tel: 021 622 4380/1730).

'The pleas for attractive promotional posters are continuous and loud but sadly there have been few publishers prepared for, or aware of, library requirements.' Right on, we've been telling 'em (i.e. our publishing friends) for years now but they've got this thing about posters only being used by booksellers, you see, who very often don't have the space or sometimes the inclination. All the more pleasing, therefore, to see a bookseller, Peters Library Service of Birmingham, doing their bit. They've just launched a series of A3 size children's book posters featuring full-colour pictures from books illustrated by Emma Chichester Clark, Mick Inkpen, and Sita Jucker. The cost is 90p for a set of three or, for an additional £1.45 per poster, Peters will mount them on 5mm foam board which is reasonable value for money. Send off for details, if you're interested.