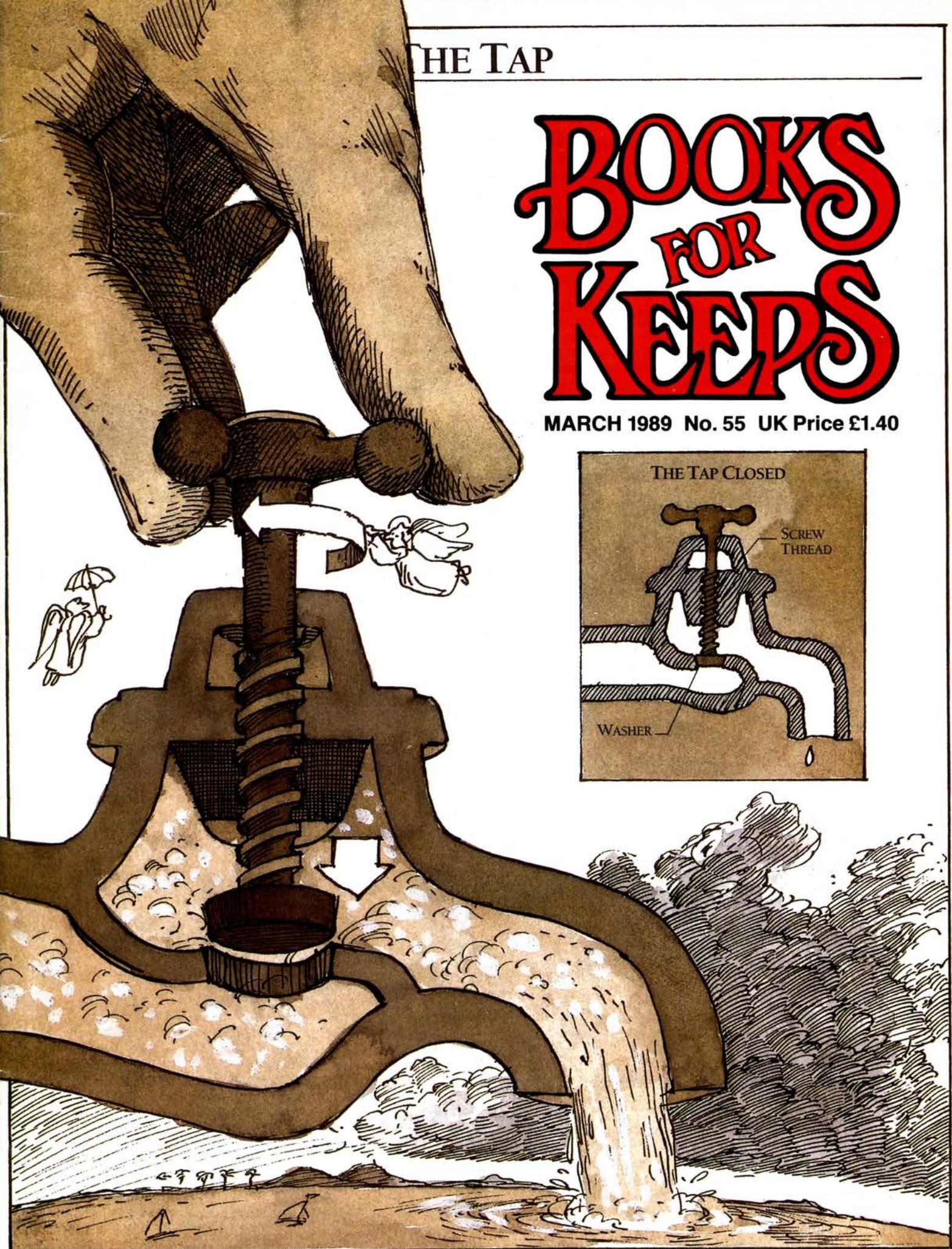


THE TAP

BOOKS FOR KEEPS

MARCH 1989 No. 55 UK Price £1.40



INFORMATION BOOKS

DAVID MACAULAY PRIMARY SCIENCE

Faber Children's Paperbacks

Faber's list of hardback fiction for children has long been established as one of the most exciting and influential lists in the country.

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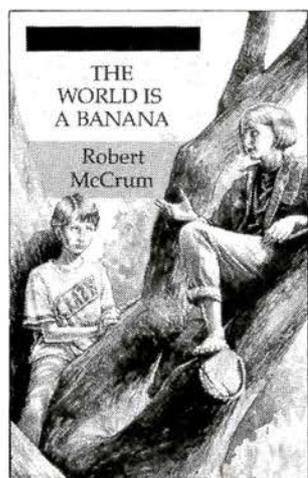
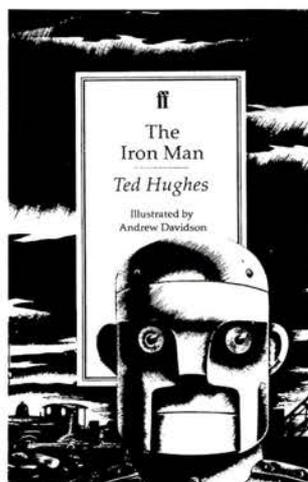
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The launch of Faber Children's Paperbacks will be one of the publishing highlights of 1989, and with many more titles to follow, the list will be one of the brightest on the bookshelves in the 1990s.

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Cover Story

The striking illustration on our cover is taken from **The Way Things Work** by David Macaulay, published by Dorling Kindersley (0 86318 323 9, £15.00).

We are grateful to Dorling Kindersley for help in using this illustration.

BOOKS FOR KEEPS

— the magazine of the
School Bookshop Association
MARCH 1989 No. 55

ISSN: 0143-909X
Editor: Pat Triggs
Managing Editor: Richard Hill
Designed and typeset by: Rondale Limited, Lydney, Glos.
Printed by: Surrey Fine Art Press Ltd, Redhill, Surrey

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Books for Keeps can be obtained on subscription by sending a cheque or postal order to Books for Keeps, 1 Effingham Road, Lee, London SE12 8NZ.

Tel: 01-852 4953.

Annual subscription for six issues:

£8.40 (UK); £12.00 (overseas surface mail)

Single copies:

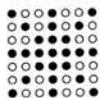
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— the Children's Book magazine incorporating British Book News **Children's Books**, is published in association with the **British Council** and with the help of **Lloyds Bank**, six times a year.

EDITOR'S PAGE



Books for Keeps, like any good magazine, is constantly evolving – growing and changing, we hope, for the better. We've spent a lot of time lately talking about how we can improve our coverage of non-fiction, considering ways of dealing with this very large slice of publishing for children which will be of use and interest to all our readers. We know you look to us for good, reliable book information. So, for a start, we will be increasing our non-fiction reviewing. But that's not all – we want to focus attention on different aspects of this interesting and difficult area of publishing which gets so little serious critical attention. Why are so many information books indistinguishable from each other? Is the dominance of the series and the double-page spread really necessary? Are non-fiction publishers producing the books that teachers and librarians really need? Where do information books come from?

To help us consider these questions (and many others) we are delighted to welcome Eleanor von Schweinitz to the **BfK** team. Eleanor taught for many years at North London Polytechnic where her enthusiasm for children's books infected many of her students – now established librarians. With Eleanor we are developing a policy for reviewing non-fiction and, at present, plan to give space to this three times a year. To clear the ground, we asked Eleanor to start by making some general comments about current non-fiction publishing (page 4). It's thought-provoking stuff; especially the idea that if the overall impression is 'could do better', teachers and librarians who buy without discrimination are as much to blame as publishers.

The Way Things Work

One of the very few authors who, in Eleanor's words, are able to produce 'work of truly individual character, with all elements completely integrated' is David Macaulay, the obvious choice for our Authorgraph in an issue featuring non-fiction (page 14). Since **Cathedral** in 1973, David Macaulay has been the creator of a string of highly distinctive (and distinguished) books, each of which has offered a unique slant on such things as the Roman city, the Egyptian pyramid, the medieval castle. Now, just in time for all of us still unsure about physics and wondering how well we'll cope with the thirteen (or was it fourteen? wondered Pooh) attainment targets in the National Curriculum for Science, comes **The Way Things Work** – a comprehensive and (for the most part) utterly comprehensible account of every kind of machine and principle of physics from levers to computers. Four sections in the book cover The Mechanics of Movement, Harnessing the Elements, Working with Waves, and Electricity and Automation. David Macaulay collaborated with Neil Ardley on the text but the sheer brilliance of the book lies in its illustrations. Tin openers, tap (see our cover), zip fasteners, light bulbs are all drawn with wit and ingenuity in a way that makes us look twice and understand connections.

And there's the woolly mammoth; a most engaging character who is levered, weighed, parachuted – in short involved in any number of experiments and exploits involving scientific principles. 'I realised,' said David Macaulay, 'that the mammoth represents all victims of technology, which we let ourselves become by not taking time to ask a few questions and look a little harder.'

Picture Book Problems

'Ask questions and look harder': good advice for problem-solvers in primary science. It's many months since I began to look at picture books for their problem-solving potential,

passing on likely titles to Chris Ollerenshaw, then an Advisory Teacher for Science, who was keen to try out cross-curricular approaches. Christine Thomas, a colleague from the Mathematics Advisory Teacher team, was also interested and together they constructed a problem-solving workshop around **The Lighthouse Keeper's Catastrophe**. Teachers (and children) they worked with warmed to the idea and other titles followed, developing the approach. (It was at this point that Ronda and David Armitage emerged so strongly.)

Faced ourselves with the problem-solving challenge of the National Curriculum – how to deliver it, how to fit it all in the time, how to hold on to the best of current practice – it seemed that using picture books to help integrate the core curriculum subjects might be something other teachers would like to try (see page 23). We haven't been able to cover everything in this brief feature; if you'd like to know more, let us know. We are actively considering a **BfK** Guide on the subject with lots of practical ideas and many more books included.

Status Conscious

Teachers being innovative in Science with picture books means more 'real' books in the classroom, more opportunities for children to discover the very special pleasures of quality text and pictures in magical combination. It's another example of how crucial teachers are to children's publishing. It's teachers who spend money on books for the curriculum; it's teachers who run the school bookshops and book clubs which enable children to buy books for themselves. A few years ago at the Booksellers Association Annual Conference I attacked a large gathering of booksellers for not taking children's books seriously; the most effective children's booksellers, I claimed, were teachers. Not surprisingly (although I acknowledged the small number of outstanding exceptions to the dreary rule), I wasn't popular. So I was intrigued to read a fascinating article in the **Bookseller** (27th January) by Liz Attenborough, editorial director of Puffin. Liz notes the 'impressive increase' in sales of children's books but asks why so little of it was through retail bookshops. She acknowledges the enormous significance of schools in putting books into children's hands. 'They've created an appetite, an audience.' But no-one is taking advantage of this. Children's books, Liz suggests, are considered low status by booksellers and publishers (outside children's departments) and herded into a special cultural ghetto by adults. 'We have a massive public relations job to do for children's books,' she says. She also suggests that one move might be for publishers to raise their prices 'to allow for enough money for larger advertising campaigns'. Any comment from the unpaid bookselling force in schools?

Much Missed

It would be impossible to close this editorial without reference to the tragically early death of Errol Le Cain in January. Phyllis Hunt, Errol's editor at Faber, recalls that relationship (page 13). He will be missed by many, not least the children of May Park Primary School in Bristol with whom he was working until he fell ill last year. May Park is just around the corner from where Errol lived. The children in this multi-racial, inner-city school are enthusiastic readers, writers and illustrators of books, and one class has been involved in a film animation project. Errol generously shared with them his expertise and enthusiasm in both art forms. The children's book world is diminished by his loss.

FACING THE FACTS

Eleanor von Schweinitz considers the current state of Information Books for children.

Why is it that many of us find it difficult to name an outstanding information book for children or to list half a dozen outstanding information book writers? Would we have the same difficulty if the question related to children's fiction? Why is there such a plethora of awards for children's fiction and only one for information books? And why is so much more critical attention paid to imaginative literature for children?

The Series Format

First, it is only fair to acknowledge the very different talents involved in writing a successful novel and creating an information book. Very few authors have the subject knowledge and the ability both to write lucidly and entertainingly for children and to illustrate their own text. But when they have, a work of truly individual character can emerge with all elements completely integrated.

Most information books of the late 1980s are the product of a streamlined process. Under the control of an editor, the work of writer and illustrator is separately commissioned and brought together by the designer, who often creates a work of considerable impact and visual appeal. Nevertheless, many such books are highly ephemeral: within a short space of time they are out of print.

The reason for this state of affairs lies in the economics of information book publishing and marketing. Economies of scale have tended to concentrate output into series, imposing a standardisation of approach that may stifle individual creativity. This is not to deny that an experienced editor working with a closely-knit team can and does produce attractive series books which communicate effectively with their chosen audience. But too often the series format imposes unhelpful constraints, quality varies from book to book, and (perhaps most damaging) information, uniformly packaged, appears undifferentiated. Series publishing has undoubtedly been encouraged by the institutional buyer. Schools and public libraries make up over 80% of the information book market. The publisher consequently sees a large slice of the market defined in terms of educational needs and this may encourage the production of mere project fodder, especially if the consumer shows little discrimination in the selection of material.

For many hard-pressed teachers, information books are chosen from publishers' catalogues, where emphasis is given to the series (indeed some catalogues omit all mention of the author or illustrator). This approach encourages many teachers to assume that a series guarantees a standard quality in all its titles, and time is often too short to re-examine this assumption once the book is acquired.

Range, Scope, Pace

A further assumption – and one that is reinforced by publishers' catalogues – is that series books are suitable for a given age range. Similar page layout, type size and illustration style do suggest a certain uniformity, but closer examination can reveal some startling anomalies.

For example, a current book on money, in a series aimed at 7 to 10 year olds, confronts the young reader with the unfamiliar notions of a national economy, capitalism, socialism,

inflation, share dealing and the stock exchange. All this in one double-page opening – four short paragraphs and three illustrations with captions.

Problems of this kind most frequently occur in those general catch-all series which include books on an indiscriminate range of subjects – historical, scientific, social, technological. Almost invariably targeted at the junior age group, such series lack any focus – and this can give rise to problems when defining the scope and approach of individual titles.

Thus a book on Bridges, in a well-established series for juniors, covers pre-historic times to the present day in a variety of countries around the globe. This in itself might seem ambitious in a book of 32 pages (of which only 24 are given over to the body of the text and where up to 50% of each page is taken up by illustrations). But a closer look at those 24 pages reveals that bridges are not only considered from a technological standpoint (bridge building materials and their relation to construction methods and bridge design) but also from a social and economic standpoint (communications and settlement patterns, trade and economic development). There is simply not enough space to introduce the range of factual information involved or explain the many different concepts needed to understand the various topics touched upon. Problems of this kind are less likely to occur in series which concentrate all their titles within a subject area and have a clearly defined approach.

The pace at which information is introduced can be critical in the learning process. Some texts introduce facts with machine-gun rapidity – expecting the reader to grasp new concepts and immediately apply them in the understanding of yet more unfamiliar facts. A successful book will explain, expand, illustrate and reinforce key ideas, often through the close interaction of text and illustration.

Words and Pictures

The relative roles of text and illustration – describing, explaining, exemplifying – vary from subject to subject. Technology makes different demands from the social sciences, for example. The reader's interest may be aroused and sustained by well-chosen illustrations in a book on animal rights, but an understanding of the subject is not dependent on them. Indeed such a notion as 'rights' cannot be directly explained by illustrations, whereas the workings of the internal combustion engine would be incomprehensible without the aid of well-labelled diagrams.

There is a high level of visual sophistication in the presentation of many new series, their initial impact depending on the dramatic use of illustration and graphics in the design of double-page openings.

The quality of illustrations can be impressive, with specially commissioned photographs and excellent artwork and dia-

grams. But however good their quality they must play an appropriate part in *explaining the subject*. The requirements of page design and the placing of illustrative material on the page can sometimes be at odds with this, so that illustrations are used as mere space fillers at one point in a book, whereas elsewhere the text is labouring to explain a complex process that requires far more detailed illustrative treatment than the page design will allow.

Choice of illustrative style can be of crucial importance. Line drawings, diagrams, full-colour artwork and photographs each have their strengths and weaknesses in relation to different subjects. For example, a recent book on road building which uses only photographs would have been much more effective in clarifying its many technical aspects if diagrams and drawings had been used instead. And consider this page on **Railways**.

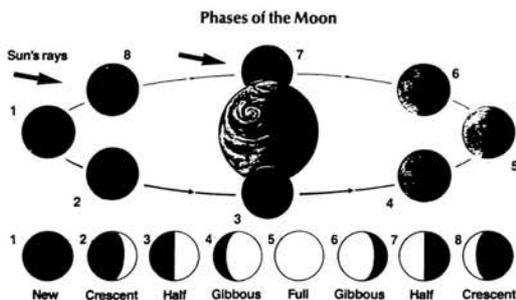


can transfer from one to the other without long delays.

The earliest trains consisted of passenger coaches or goods wagons pulled by a separate locomotive. Until about 1900 almost every locomotive was worked by steam. **Water in the boiler was heated by a very hot fire, fed with coal, oil or wood, and turned into steam at high pressure. This was piped to cylinders where the pressure pushed pistons to and fro. These were connected to pivoted rods which turned the wheels.** Modern trains no longer run on steam, because

In the past steam trains such as this one were to be seen in the city of Montreal.

This is from a recent (1987) book on Railways. It covers a very wide range of aspects and hops from one to the other without much coherence or logic. Among the hotchpotch is this piece of text on how steam engines work. If it is to be included (questionable in a book like this) then it needs a clear, well-labelled diagram to illustrate the process.



The Moon circles the Earth every 28 days. During this time it also turns once on its own axis, so that the same side of the Moon always faces the Earth. But the Earth and Moon are also travelling around the Sun, and

so the amount of light falling on the face of the Moon changes. At a full moon, the Sun is shining directly on the side facing the Earth. At a new moon, the Sun is behind the Moon and shines on the far side.

There is no other information in the book to support this illustration and caption.

Captions and labels can both play an important part in linking text and illustrations. But when diagrams use labels which do not match the terminology of the text, is it any wonder that the reader, struggling, let us say, with the finer points of the four-stroke engine, soon gives up – as for example the following illustration all too clearly demonstrates.

Four-Stroke

Four-stroke engines are so called because there is one 'power stroke' in every four made by the piston. Gas flow within the engine is controlled by valves which are opened by cams, hence the term 'over-head camshaft' used by modern manufacturers.

INDUCTION: Inlet valve open, piston moving down to suck in a mixture of air and petrol.

COMPRESSION: The spinning crankshaft sends the piston back up to compress the mixture.

POWER: The spark explodes the mixture, forcing the piston down to turn the crankshaft.

EXHAUST: Exhaust valve open, the piston expels waste gases before repeating cycle.

Captions can serve a variety of purposes. They may merely identify, they may discuss, explain or question. In each case they can form a bridge between the illustration and the text, facilitating interaction and furthering understanding. However, in books where text and illustration are separately commissioned, they may be so used in the page design that illustrations and their captions have no organic relationship with the text.

Sometimes, in an attempt to make an illustration self-sufficient, the accompanying caption is so long that it becomes difficult to distinguish from the text (especially if a similar typeface and size is used for each). These illustrations with their bumper captions are especially demanding for the reader because they often present difficult concepts in a highly condensed form and in total isolation.

Writing Readable Text

The text of an information book presents a challenge to the writer who must often condense and simplify yet at the same time try to avoid distortion or inaccuracy. A further problem when writing for younger children is that some of them will still be inexperienced readers. Faced with these problems, writers often fail to convey any enthusiasm for their subject. Texts are frequently pedestrian. Vocabulary is restricted. And by deliberately seeking to avoid any structural complexity, sentences and whole paragraphs become stilted, lacking the normal flow of easy communication. The outcome can be a text that 'reads' easily but fails to communicate coherently with the reader. Some publishers have attempted to tackle this problem by adopting a narrative or first-person approach in books for younger children but here again there are immense difficulties in finding an easy and convincing style.

Publishers are only too aware of the pitfalls when producing books for younger readers and they have frequently sought the help of educationalists when editing series aimed at the early reader. But the imprimatur of the reading expert is often attached to the duller texts.

Publishers have responded to the educational research done on readability formulae (with the attendant stress on the length and complexity of words or sentences). But they have neglected the growing number of equally important studies which show that the way a text is structured is more significant than the so-called 'difficulty' of individual words and sentences.

Structure, of course, includes the overall organisation of the information and ideas throughout the book. A really well-integrated structure is never easy to achieve – but it is clearly impossible when the content is as wide and multifarious as that of the example on bridges referred to earlier.

FACING THE FACTS

Structure can also refer to the organisation of material within short passages of the text. A simply worded paragraph may, in fact, present a formidable barrier to understanding if its content lacks structural coherence – as the following passage (from a series for 10+ year olds) demonstrates.

'The music of carnival in Rio is the Samba. The dance of the same name is performed to this music and is made up of tilting and rocking motions of the body. In the parade the samba is usually danced in groups, but can be danced in couples. Today, the parade is as much for the tourists as for the local people. Brazil is the largest Catholic country in the world and after twenty-one years of military rule the people of Rio are poor. They see this as God's will, but everyone is equal at carnival and judged only on their ability to parade. Points are given under headings including songs, choreography, floats and rhythm.'

In mainstream (rather than text book) publishing for the secondary-age reader, the uninhibited voice of the author can sometimes be heard. Heather Couper and Nigel Henbest's enthusiasm for astronomy reverberates in their prose and, for once, the browser attracted by dramatic illustrations will not lose interest when turning to the text nor lack clear, accessible information.

'The Sun is now a middle-aged star, about half way through its life. In about 5,000 million years time the centre of the Sun will run out of the hydrogen gas that powers its nuclear reactions. The "ash" of helium from the nuclear reactions will then form into a small dense core at the Sun's heart.

When this happens, the Sun's outer layers of gas will swell up to compensate, and the Sun will grow to a hundred times its present size. Its surface will cool down, to glow a dull red colour. The Sun will then be a red giant star.

The outer layers of a red giant are not stable, however. They pulsate in and out; and eventually the Sun will puff off its outer gases in a ring-like cloud called a planetary nebula.

Left behind will be the Sun's core, now exposed as a tiny, brilliant and very hot

star called a white dwarf. The white dwarf will be very dense, and no larger than the Earth. But it will have no supplies of energy. Like an ember on a fire, it will gradually cool down, and eventually become a dark star invisible except at very close quarters.'

Some of the most lively writing can be found in books on controversial topics where publishers have been willing to tackle subjects that give rise to strong emotions and differences of view. The insistence in some quarters that an issue should be considered from all viewpoints and in a dispassionate manner is hardly a prescription for lively writing. And the dutiful drawing up of a balance sheet is unlikely to provoke interest, let alone thought, on the part of the reader. Fortunately there are one or two writers for older children who examine difficult social and political subjects by skilfully juxtaposing factual statements in a thought-provoking manner and challenging the reader's attitudes by posing questions. Other writers have tackled contentious areas, such as the nuclear debate or green issues, with an open concern which comes through in refreshingly readable prose.

'**Questions of morality.** The moral issues surrounding terrorism are not always as clear as one might think. Is all human life equally sacred, or are there circumstances when murder is justifiable? On 20 July 1944, an attempt to blow up the Nazi leader Adolf Hitler, failed. If the tyrant had been killed, how many innocent lives would have been saved?

Is there a moral difference between murdering an innocent bystander and murdering the soldier of an oppressive army of occupation? Is there a difference between a soldier killing an enemy and a terrorist killing an enemy? Or between the murder of a child and the murder of an adult? Is *risking* human life as evil as *taking* human life?'

Raising moral issues in a book on Terrorism.

Eye-catching Design

Questions of structure and meaning are especially pertinent for those packagers of information for whom 'presentation' would appear to be an end in itself. They are frequently in danger of sacrificing coherence and intelligibility to eye-catching page design.

Many information books divide up their material into standardised sections within double-page openings, each topped by a bold heading. It goes without saying that few subjects lend themselves to being chopped up into these uniform pieces. Different aspects of a subject may have to be

condensed or padded out to fill the space available. Each page opening appears to be a self-contained package of information of equal weight to the one before. Any development or flow of ideas between them is obscured by the strident visual messages sent out by the page design.

These are books to catch the wandering eye of the child raised in an age of television advertisements. They are visually exciting and arouse interest but they do little to develop a real understanding of the subject. They may provide a handy sentence or two to copy into a project folder, but for the browser who gets hooked and wishes to learn bewilderment may follow. Where is the starting point? How does this illustration relate to that? How does it all add up?

Contents, Index: Retrieving Information

The headings used in these designer books are often catchy, alliterative, or allusive, requiring a certain level of verbal sophistication or prior knowledge of the subject for their interpretation. Some series reproduce a list of these headings on the contents page, to the mystification of anyone expecting to find a clearly structured outline of the subject.

Contents

4 What are the media?	38 Mass appeal?
6 What makes a good story?	40 Playing to the audience?
8 All the news that's fit to print?	42 Whose freedom, anyway?
10 Subversive agents?	44 Star billing?
12 A threat to education?	46 The price of the message?
14 'Full of sex and violence'?	48 Why don't some things get said?
16 What about the kids?	50 A showcase for your country?
18 Personality plus?	52 The hardest sell of all?
20 Performance rules OK?	54 The hand of friendship?
22 What about the workers?	56 Finest in the world?
24 Villains to order?	58 The media we deserve?
26 Are we being (s)exploited?	<i>Reference</i>
28 Beautiful people?	60 The development of the mass media
30 Can journalists be trusted?	62 Reading and viewing
32 Matters of public concern?	63 Index
34 New sports for old?	64 Credits
36 Window on the world?	

Catchy headings for 28 double spreads on the media make for fairly unhelpful guidance for the information seeker consulting the list of contents.

The index, together with the contents page, is the main retrieval device of the information book. Educationalists now put considerable emphasis on the need for children to acquire the skills of information retrieval, whether it be to trace information through an automated electronic system or a printed book. Most information books for junior and secondary-age groups have an index but many of them are woefully inadequate. How can we expect our children to become independent learners if we give them useless tools?

There are real difficulties for the indexer of many junior information books. The wide range of subjects touched upon in the text without substantial development poses a problem. Too often an index is little more than an arbitrary selection of terms with no apparent reason for their inclusion or omission.

The reader is often directed to a word in the text but finds no real 'information' there or, alternatively, he looks for an expected term in vain. A recent book on the secret service which fails to index the word 'spy' is hardly likely to inspire confidence in the reader.

There is less excuse when this happens in a book for older readers, which is likely to have a far more meaty text. For example, a current book on the media fails to index such key concepts as 'bias' and 'censorship'. It omits important legislation such as the Official Secrets Act, and even significant personalities such as Mary Whitehouse. In fact, of the 65 terms in the index 21 are the names of newspapers, although the text deals far less substantively with most of these than it does with the terms that have been omitted.

Even more perverse is the index which includes important terms but conceals them. Subjects are not entered directly in the alphabetical sequence but classified as sub-divisions of broader terms. In a book on the environment the reader will look in vain at G for greenhouse effect or W for whale. With perseverance they may be discovered: the whale at H (under hunting) and the greenhouse effect at W (under weather).

Yet another fault in many indexes is to list up to 20 or more undifferentiated page references following an entry term. A supreme example of this is in a 48-page book called *Lifeboat* – in which the index has the term 'lifeboat' followed by a string of 48 separate page references. To add insult to injury a further 9 entry terms are subordinated to lifeboat (including the term 'crew').

Many books now include a glossary and this can provide useful support to the text. But an entry in the glossary cannot make up for fundamental deficiencies in the text. It is not the place to define key concepts. If their meaning is not made clear in the body of the text with all the means at the writer's disposal (extended explanation, illustration and exemplification), it is hardly likely that all will be revealed through a glossary definition. Nor is the glossary the place to introduce new information which should have been included in the text. In a recent new edition of a book on South African society, in which considerable attention is given to apartheid, the only account of the ANC appears in a brief glossary entry.

Further Reading

Lists of further readings can provide useful suggestions for the reader whose interest has been aroused, perhaps by some aspect of the subject. Some of the titles in a well established series for older readers provide a model of how this should be done. The selection is imaginative and the succinct appraisals of content, viewpoint, authority, and so on, are sufficiently skilful to whet the appetite. But this is an honourable exception to the usual bare bibliographical listing of half-a-dozen to a dozen books, arranged in author order. It is hard to imagine even the most enthusiastic reader being inspired to visit a library and ask for one of these faceless objects, with no clue but the title to indicate what the book is about, and no indication of the particular features which have led to its being recommended.

A recent book on carnival (in a series for 10+ year olds) lists nine items for further reading. About halfway through the list appears: Frazer, Sir J.G. *The Golden Bough*, Macmillan, 1936. The young reader who enquires for this at the local branch library is likely to be referred to the central reference library – to be confronted with this 13-volume classic (originally published between 1890 and 1915). The compiler of the reading list might at least have had the heart to recommend the abridged one-volume edition.

Much more imagination is shown when it comes to recommending organisations to contact for further information (or to join) and places to visit. These are usually briefly and often temptingly described. Why can't the same be done for the books that are recommended?

FACING THE FACTS

Some Improvement. Could Do Better?

In recent years many publishers have responded to the wide concern over social attitudes in materials for young people. Though initially slow to react, they have shown a growing awareness of these issues, in both the subject matter and approach of their information books. In particular, the number of books which support a multi-cultural view of society is increasing.

Publishers have also shown courage in tackling a range of controversial and tricky subjects – such as drugs and AIDS. There is an evident sincerity of purpose in some of these books which is very heartening.

In another welcome development, a few publishers are venturing into the relatively uncharted waters of information books for the nursery/infant age group.

But, overall, the picture is rather a dispiriting one. So many bright and attractive books are fundamentally incoherent; texts are mundane; words and illustrations fail to achieve their full potential because they fail to interact; retrieval devices are seriously deficient.

It is only when teachers and librarians exert pressure through greater discrimination in their selection of information books that publishers will be encouraged to confront some of these questions. ■

We have deliberately not identified the books referred to in this article. They are mentioned as illustrations of trends evident in many books from a wide range of publishers.

A regular series of articles to follow on this subject will review and recommend specific titles.

Eleanor von Schweinitz was a Senior Lecturer at the Polytechnic of North London in the School of Librarianship and Information Studies for just over 22 years. Before that she worked in a London comprehensive and in the Somerset Schools Library Service. She is currently engaged on a research project (she calls it 'thesaurus construction') and, when she can find the time, does freelance lecturing and consultancy work. Her interest in children's non-fiction grew from her activities as one of the founder judges of the TES Junior Information Book Award. In 1987-88 Eleanor spent five months at Book Trust, after a break in her professional life, making an in-depth study of current information book publishing.

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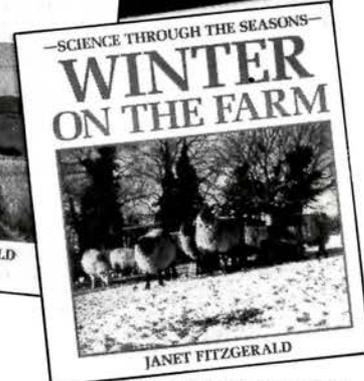
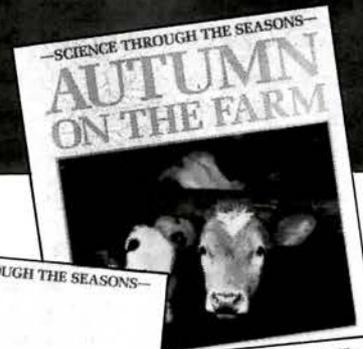
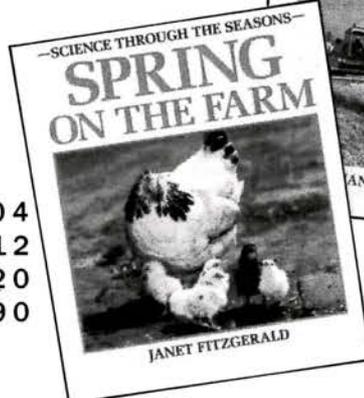
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LIFELINE 4: PROJECTS AND TOPICS

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.

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.

PART 5: THE SENSES

To cover this topic thoroughly, you will need to consider a variety of categories of books: those which are part of a planned science programme, books about the body, about the individual senses and also perhaps those which look at the senses in animals. Nearly all the books here have an experimental approach which seems appropriate for a topic like this one.

INFORMATION BOOKS

Science Early Learners. Fay J Humphreys and John A Henderson, Blackie Educational 1986, 0 216 91902 9, £4.95 non-net. A whole section on the senses in this teacher's handbook meant to accompany a set of books for infants and young juniors. The intention is to introduce scientific principles from the start and non-specialist teachers will find it particularly useful.

Ourselves, Stages 1 and 2, Schools Council Science 5/13, Macdonald 1976, 0 356 04349 5, £4.95 non-net. This part of a well-tested series looks at sight, hearing, smell and touch. Objectives and activities clearly set out.

Think Well 7: Get Clean!, Schools Council Health Education 5/13, Nelson 1977, 0 17 423082 6, £76.00 non-net. Pack composed of Teacher's Guide, resource sheets and spirit masters, for the middle years. (Individual title available separately: 0 17 423083 4, £4.75 non-net.) See also **All About Me**, teacher's guide to the whole project, 0 17 423067 2, £8.95 non-net.

Learning Through Science 5: All Around. Schools Council, Macdonald 1982, 0 356 07553 2, £12.95 non-net. For children 5/13, activity oriented, coloured workcards with sections on smell, touch and sound. Teacher's guide to help with the organisation and objectives.

Your Senses. Dorothy Baldwin and Claire Lister, Wayland 1983, 0 85078 304 6, £4.95. Sensibly arranged chapters, well illustrated. Proper vocabulary used throughout, plus a glossary. All the senses, including the relationship with balance.

Good Health 4, Vaughan Johnson and Trefor Williams, Nelson 1980, 0 17 423094 X, £2.95 non-net. For the ATV series, for about 10-12 years. A chapter on the nervous system explains how the body feels things.

My Body. Health Education Authority Project, Heinemann Education 1986 rev. ed., 0 435 04499 0, £56.50 non-net. A very comprehensive unit which includes teacher's notes (available separately, 0 435 04500 8, £11.50 non-net), classroom cards and games pack. The senses are covered in the 'Control' section which studies the body's monitoring and response mechanisms. 5-12 years.

Young Scientist Book of the Human Body. n.a., Usborne 1983, 0 86020 748 X, £4.95. A general look at the body with graphic but crowded double spreads on the skin, the eye and the ear, plus the 'human computer' which explains the brain's role.

The Human Body. Terry Jennings, Oxford 1986, 0 19 918208 6, £2.25 (school edition); 0 19 918209 4, £3.95. Good mixture of photographs and diagrams. See 'Speaking and hearing', 'Eyes and seeing' and 'Senses and the sense organs'.

Touch, Smell and Taste

What's That Feel?, Kate Petty and Lisa Kopper, Franklin Watts 1986, 0 86313 466 1, £3.95. Reception level picture book featuring objects and textures children will be familiar with and can try themselves. See also **What's That Smell?**, 0 86313 464 5, and **What's That Taste?**, 0 86313 384 3, £3.95 each.

Touching. Henry Pluckrose, Franklin Watts 1986, 0 86313 276 6, £5.25. Good colour photographs of tactile experiences - sticky, rough, smooth. See also **Smelling.** 0 86313 278 2, £5.25.

Touch. Ed Catherall, Wayland 1982, 0 85340 868 8, £4.95. Brightly illustrated, practical book which will take children through all kinds of tactile experiences. See also **Taste and Smell.** 0 85340 869 6, £4.95.

You do the washing-up with it.

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... and lots more.

All the different kinds of gooey stuff and all the different ways it can be used make goo very interesting. Some scientists study goo. They ask questions about it. What is it made of? What does it do? How can you use it? How can you make it?

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If you want to play with gooey stuff - read on...

Touch, Taste and Smell. Brian R Ward, Franklin Watts 1988, 0 86313 740 7, £6.95. New edition of this book which now includes colour photographs.

Skin and Bone. Gwynne Vevers, Bodley Head 1983, 0 370 30501 9, o/p. Part of the book deals with the sensory aspects of the skin, amusingly illustrated by Sarah Pooley.

Tasting and Smelling. Nigel Snell, Hamish Hamilton 1983, 0 241 10941 8, £3.95. Simple, single sentence introductions to basic ideas – that things smell good and bad, that we can taste sweet and sour.

Sticky and Slimy. Vicky Cobb and Doffy Weir, A & C Black 1988, 0 7136 2990 8, £4.95. Sensitive teachers may not be able to cope with this, but it is well organised so leave them to it. Having experienced the sticky, slimy and revolting, we find out why it happens like that. From about 6, but lively enough to appeal across the primary range.

Hearing

What's That Noise? Kate Petty and Lisa Kopper, Franklin Watts 1986, 0 86313 383 5, £3.95. Definitely about noise rather than sound! Jolly picture book about household noises for the youngest.

Hearing. Nigel Snell, Hamish Hamilton 1983, 0 241 10938 8, R£3.95. Captioned picture book, very simple explanations and some easy experiments to try.



SQUISH and SQUEEZE



and SQUASH and SMASH!

From *Don't Touch!*

Picture Books

Gobble, Growl, Grunt. Peter Spier, Heinemann, 0 434 96412 3, £6.50. An entire world of animals and the sounds they make.

Don't Touch! Suzy Kline and Dora Leder, Picture Puffins,

The Ear and Hearing. Brian R Ward, Franklin Watts 1981, 0 85166 930 1, £6.25. Technical artwork on the parts of the ear, hearing mechanisms and sound itself. Informative glossary.

Ears and Hearing. Doug Kincaid and Peter Coles, Arnold-Wheaton 1981, 0 08 026409 3, £2.15. Simple picture-caption format, each page suggesting easy but apt activities. Possible extensions to the activities and a list of 'equipment' included.

Hearing. Ed Catherall, Wayland 1981, 0 85340 867 X, o/p. Ear structure is covered but mainly about simple experiments with sound. A chance to put someone's head in a bucket.

Sounds. Terry Jennings, Oxford 1984, 0 19 918160 8, £2.25 (school edition); 0 19 918166 7, £3.95. Not only human hearing but animal, too, plus a section on noise pollution. A memory check after each section and a list of activities, including how to make yourself a pair of enormous paper ears.

Talkabout Sound. Angela Webb, Franklin Watts 1987, 0 86313 564 1, £5.25. For young children. Full-page photographs of objects and children generating sound waves.

Experimenting with Sound. Alan Ward, Dryad 1987, 0 85219 662 8, £7.95. The preface emphasises that the sense of hearing affects the way we learn about the world and then offers a varied and inventive set of experiments to encourage children to become more 'observant' as listeners.

Sight

Seeing. Nigel Snell, Hamish Hamilton 1983, 0 241 10939 6, £3.95. Simple pictures, a brief text and a few visual puzzles to solve.

Seeing. Henry Pluckrose, Franklin Watts 1985, 0 86313 279 0, £5.25. Essentially a picture book for the youngest, to stimulate discussion. More about what we see than how we see it.

Sight. n.a., Macdonald 'My First Library' 1984, 0 356 10199 1, £4.50. Looks at eye sight and vision. Makes quite a good job of explaining the biology simply for juniors.

The Eye and Seeing. Brian K Ward, Franklin Watts 1988, 0 86313 739 3, £6.95. Double spreads on each aspect, taking in physical structure, eye problems and decoding visual information. Extended glossary.

Eyes and Looking. Doug Kincaid and Peter Coles, Arnold-Wheaton 1981, 0 08 026411 5, £2.15. Colourful pictures and short captions draw our attention simply to the complexities of seeing. Concepts covered are listed and the activities demand only easily accessible materials.

Simon Goes to the Optician. Jill Coleman, A & C Black 1984, 0 7136 2338 1, £4.50. Well photographed and realistic. Simon makes a visit to be fitted with glasses. The equipment is particularly well demonstrated.

Moving into the Animal World

How Animals Behave. Keith Porter, Cambridge 'Science World' 1987, 0 521 33242 7, £5.25. Includes sections on the way animals depend on their senses. See especially 'How insects see and feel'.

Looking at the Senses. Nina Sully, Batsford 1982, 0 7134 4059 7, o/p. A dense text, covering both animals and humans, each topic (such as 'The Cat's Whiskers') occupying a double spread. Useful for chasing up special features.

Just to Keep Things in Proportion

How to Really Fool Yourself. Vicki Cobb, Lippincott 1981, 0 397 31907 X, £6.95. A book to remind us that our senses are not infallible. A series of intriguing activities which show how we are subject to illusion.

0 14 050.861 9, £1.95 pbk. There's all sorts of reasons for not touching things, so out comes the clay for a real, hands-on experience.

Misty's Mischief. Rod Campbell, Viking Kestrel, 0 670 80149 6, £5.95. Simple sentences describe the cat's activities and the final picture provides a fur Misty to stroke.

FICTION AND POETRY

The Touch and Feel ABC Book, Margaret Chamberlain, Methuen, 0 416 54790 7, £4.95. Vigorously illustrated alphabet book with a tactile effect on the letters.

Noisy, Shirley Hughes, Walker, 0 7445 0302 7, £2.95; 0 7445 0923 8, £1.50 pbk. Small children being noisy in familiar ways. Brief captions.

Nicky's Noisy Night, Harriet Ziefert, Picture Puffins, 0 14 050.583 0, £2.95 pbk. Noises behind the curtains, the door, the window. Lift the flap to find the source.

Mortimer, Robert Munsch and Michael Martchenko, Oxford, 0 19 279844 8, £3.95. 'Thump, thump, thump', all the family comes upstairs to tell Mortimer to be quiet but 'clang, clang, rattle-bing-bang', he isn't.

The Very Busy Spider, Eric Carle, Hamish Hamilton, 0 241 11430 6, £10.95. Large, farmyard pictures, plus a raised spider's web which can be followed by the fingers as well as the eye.

The Hairy Book, Babette Cole, Cape, 0 224 02193 1, £4.95; Magnet, 0 416 95760 9, £1.95 pbk. A book of sensations, both good and ghastly! A similar experience is offered by the same author's **The Slimy Book**, Cape, 0 224 02843 X, £4.95; Picture Lions, 0 00 662840 0, £1.95 pbk.

Scruff, Gerald Rose, Bodley Head, 0 370 30619 8, £5.50; Magnet, 0 416 53170 9, £1.95 pbk. There's an awful smell. Scruff the dog can smell it wherever he goes - and never quite sees why.

Can You Hear Me, Grandad?, Pat Thomson, Gollancz, 0 575 03886 1, £2.95; 0 575 504336 9, £1.99 pbk. Grandad teases by pretending to mishear, which is how you get the flying carrots and Mum on a tiger.

Short Stories

A House Inside Out, Penelope Lively, Deutsch, 0 233 98167 5, £5.95. 'Willie, the Hamburger and the Busride'. Willie the dog has an adventure and the reader gets a 'dog's nose view' of his afternoon.

Now Then, Charlie Robinson, Sylvia Woods, Faber, 0 571 14932 4, £5.95. 'Charlie Robinson, Detective'. Charlie's success as a detective is based on the effect of the way sound travels.

Family Gathering, Pat Thomson, Dent, 0 460 06268 9, £8.50. 'My Birthday' by Laurie Lee who describes the day, experiencing it with all his five senses.

Red Letter Days, Gillian Avery, Cape, o/p. 'On Seeing the World for the First Time'. Richard Church describes the first time he puts on glasses.

Novels

Too Loud, Laura, Kate Dawson, Hamish Hamilton, 0 241 11516 7, £2.75. When noisy Laura at last manages to be quiet, she begins to hear things in a most useful way.

The Day the Smells Went Wrong, Catherine Sefton, Hamish Hamilton, 0 241 12237 6, £3.95. Everything smells of something else, and then the children discover why. Very short novel.

Buttons, Linda Yeatman, Piccadilly/Hippo, o/p. The story of a 'Hearing Dog for the Deaf'.

Focus Pocus, Beatrice Gormley, Macdonald, 0 356 13186 6, £6.95; 0 356 13187 4, £2.50 pbk. Andrea gets her glasses from a new, and very strange, optician. It seems that they have a peculiar power.

The Chimneys of Green Knowe, Lucy Boston, Faber, 0 571 07030 2, o/p; Puffins, 0 14 03.0840 7, £2.25 pbk. The old house, in which past and present merge, puts Tolley in touch with Susan, a blind girl from another century. Sounds, smells and touch are emphasised in this excellent novel.

Mundo and the Weather Child, Joyce Dunbar, Heinemann, 0 434 93590 5, £6.95; Piper, 0 330 29806 2, £1.95 pbk. Edmund is locked into his silent world until the magical weather child helps him to break through into the normal world once more. A moving account of a deaf child's isolation in a powerfully imaginative novel.

Emma's Story, Sheila Hocken, Gollancz, 0 575 02890 4, o/p. A real-life account of a guide dog and its blind mistress.

The Witch's Daughter, Nina Bawden, Gollancz, 0 575 00177 1, £8.95; Puffins, 0 14 03.0407 X, £1.95 pbk. An adventure story in which blind Janey rescues her sighted companions by 'seeing' with her fingers. Both exciting and moving.

Poetry

Only one location is given for each poem although they may appear in other collections. The first three anthologies are entirely devoted to the one topic.

Noisy Poems, Jill Bennett, Oxford, 0 19 276063 7, £4.95

Preludes: Five Senses, Rhodri Jones, Heinemann, 0 435 14506 1, £2.50

Sense and Nonsense: Looking, Susanne and Shona McKellar, Macdonald, 0 356 11438 4, £2.95. There are three other anthologies in the series, **Listening** (0 356 11440 6), **Touching** (0 356 11439 2) and **Tasting** (0 356 11437 6), £2.95 each.

Island of the Children, Angela Huth, Orchard, 1 85213 062 8, £8.95. 'Mary and Sarah' by Richard Edwards.

Someone is Flying Balloons, Jill Heylen and Celia Jellett, Cambridge, 0 521 32127 1, £9.95. 'Automatic Wash Cycle' by Peter McFarlane.

A Fifth Poetry Book, John Foster, Oxford, 0 19 916054 6, £4.95; 0 19 916053 8, £2.95 pbk. 'Creating Light' by Edward Lowbery. 'The Game at the Hallowe'en Party in Hangman's Wood' by Wes Magee.

Singing in the Sun, Jill Bennett, Viking Kestrel, 0 670 81710 4, £5.95. 'Sound of Water' by Mary O'Neill and 'Grandpa Dropped his Glasses' by Leroy F Jackson.

'King Foo-Foo' in **Figgie Hobbin**, poems by Charles Causley, Macmillan, 0 333 12078 7, o/p; Puffins, 0 14 03.1162 9, £2.50 pbk

'Glenis' in **Please, Mrs Butler**, poems by Allan Ahlberg, Viking Kestrel, 0 670 80617 X, £5.95; Puffins, 0 14 03.1494 6, £1.75 pbk

USEFUL ADDRESSES

British Deaf Association

38 Victoria Place
Carlisle
Cumbria
CA1 1HU
(Packs, manual alphabet card)

Disabled Living Foundation

380/384 Harrow Road
London
W9 2HU
(Information pack)

Health Education Council

78 New Oxford Street
London
WC1A 1AH
(Publications list)

The following organisations offer information or materials to schools at no cost or for a nominal sum. For full details, send an s.a.e.

Health Education Office

via your local Health
Education Service,
see telephone directory
(Booklets, leaflets, posters)

Kodak

Customer Relations
Department
P O Box 66
Kodak House
Hemel Hempstead
HP1 1JU
(Chart, booklet)

National Society for Clean Air

136 North Street
Brighton
BN1 1RG
(Noise Project Pack, £2)

Noise Abatement Society

P O Box 8
Bromley
Kent
BR2 0UH
(Information)

Optical Information Council

Walter House
418-422 Strand
London
WC2R 0PB
(Information)

Royal National Institute for the Blind

224 Great Portland Street
London
W1N 6AA
(Information, publications)

Other themes to be covered in the series include **Festivals and Celebrations**. Previous themes: **House and Home** (July 88); **Water** (September 88); **Clothing** (November 88); and **Food** (January 89).

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.

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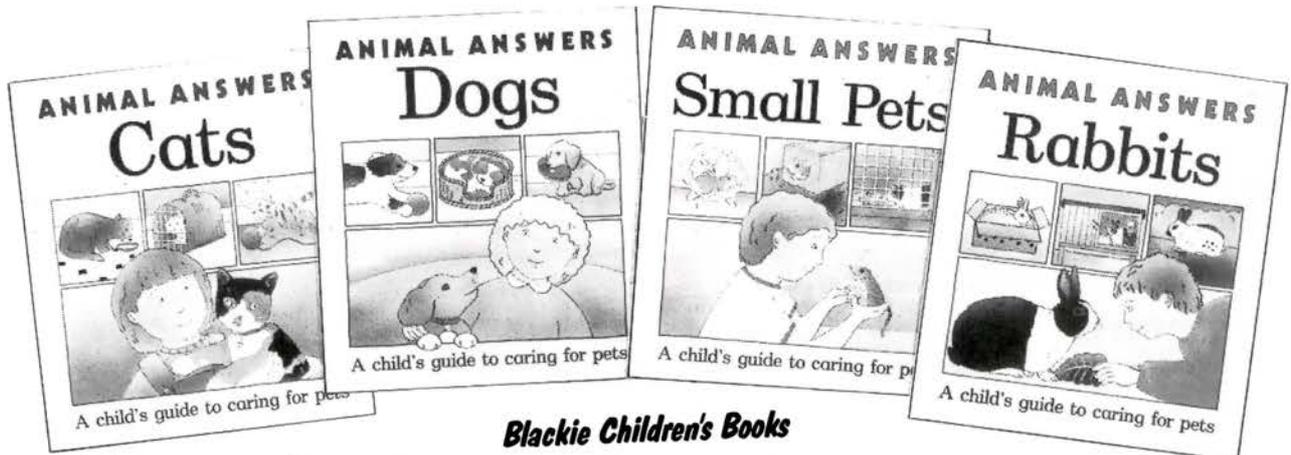


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A TRIBUTE TO ERROL LE CAIN

In January we heard the sad news that **Errol Le Cain** had died.

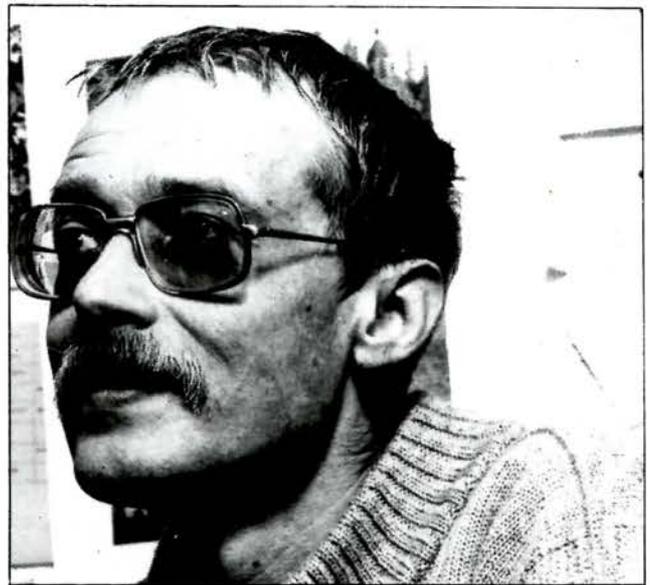
Phyllis Hunt, his editor at Faber for 20 years, recalls that relationship.

I first met Errol Le Cain in 1967. A literary agent had brought me a typescript and a sheaf of illustrations for a story about King Arthur; he had received them from a friend of the artist, who was said to be too shy to approach a publisher except at third hand. Once our enthusiasm for his pictures had been reported to him this terror must have abated, for I next remember visiting him at the Richard Williams Studios. He was indeed very shy but also very forthcoming, and this combination of diffidence with a readiness to meet everyone more than half-way was always characteristic of him. It was a most endearing quality.

It must have been soon after this that I asked him to dinner, to meet two Faber authors. Unluckily it was a wet night, and Errol (who never learned to drive) arrived drenched, his usual slightly forlorn air exaggerated to caricature by the rain dripping from him in all directions. My other guests were kindly people, but I could see they were wondering where I had picked up this curious waif and stray, until he produced proofs of his illustrations for **The Ancient Mariner**, and converted them instantly into devotees. These pictures were done for a *de luxe* edition and printed on paper said to be made from seaweed. (The firm that published it was short-lived, perhaps not surprisingly.) Errol's work was very striking, but I wish he could have illustrated the poem again after his style had matured, especially as he told me he would have liked to attempt an entirely different interpretation after reading Empson's fascinating if perverse defence of the Mariner. This was only one of many projects outside the children's book field that we discussed half seriously: **A Midsummer Night's Dream**, **Omar Khayyám**, **Archy and Mehitabel**. For children's books, of course, the possibilities were endless. There was never time for a fraction of what he wanted to do.



'The earth trembled a little and opened in front of them.' From *Aladdin*.



He was fascinated by myths and legends of all times and places, and there was a certain strangeness in his art that made him the perfect illustrator for fairy tales. It's impossible to forget scenes like the desolate castle in **Thorn Rose** or the silver and golden forests in **The Twelve Dancing Princesses**. Among the books of this kind **Cinderella** was his favourite, partly because he considered it the archetypal fairy story and partly, I think, because it included a brilliant use of techniques suggesting animation: the mouse develops into a horse stage by stage and Cinderella passes from riches to rags as she runs wildly through the darkness.

His first book, **King Arthur's Sword**, was entirely serious, but humour was already creeping into his second, **The Cabbage Princess**, where an absurd tale about a king whose ill temper leads to the transformation of his daughter into a cabbage is treated with baroque grandeur. There is something very characteristic in the charm with which Errol invested the mutated but still ravishing princess. He was never more inventive than in his most comic works, **Mrs Fox's Wedding**, **Christmas 1993** and **Growltiger's Last Stand**, a dazzlingly witty treatment of three poems from T S Eliott's **Practical Cats**.

After **King Arthur's Sword** a new picture book for Faber followed almost every year. But this was only a small part of his output; there were commissions for other firms, both British and American, and above all his regular work for the Richard Williams Studios. His film animation was as brilliant as his illustrations and in fact occupied most of his time; he regarded his books as holidays, and they were his nearest approach to a holiday, for he almost never stopped working.

While he was still living in London I could occasionally tempt him out. I remember an expedition to Midhurst in search of family connections; his exotically mixed ancestry, mainly Malay and French-Canadian, unexpectedly include a Sussex streak. We couldn't find any trace of his relations, but it was a happy occasion; a day off was so rare for him that he enjoyed it like a child.

After he moved to Herne Bay and later to Bristol I inevitably saw less of him, though he always brought his artwork to the office in person and I would collect an audience to admire it. When I retired in the autumn of 1987 he came to my leaving party and seemed to be in excellent form. A few months later he fell ill and I never saw him again, though we talked on the phone. In our last conversation, not long before Christmas, he sounded entirely himself and was full of projects for the future. It is tragic that none of them can be realised. ■

Authorgraph No. 55



David Macaulay is a warm, friendly man with a shock of hair that always seems to need cutting, a thick brown moustache and – not surprising to anyone who has read his books – a wry sense of humour. He was born in 1936 in Burton on Trent, and spent the first ten years of his life in Bolton. When he was almost eleven, his father's work took the family to the United States. For a while they lived in suburban New Jersey.

Here drawing, which had always been an interest, suddenly took on a new importance for Macaulay. Coming from an English childhood to a faster paced American life, he found himself, at age ten, feeling much younger than his classmates. 'One of the ways I dealt with that was to show off with my drawing. I used drawing to gain some attention and I guess maybe to deflect attention away from the different side of me. I was always one of the top drawing students. I made pictures all along to focus attention on myself in a way I wanted it focused, not just because I seemed odd.'



Macaulay hastens to add that his early days in the United States were not unpleasant. 'I was looking forward to coming, I was excited. And feeling that way it was just a matter of making it work, of fitting in, of creating a mix that was somehow accepted.'

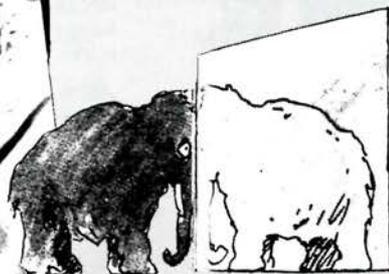
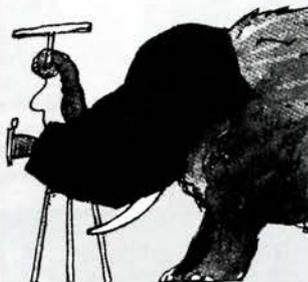
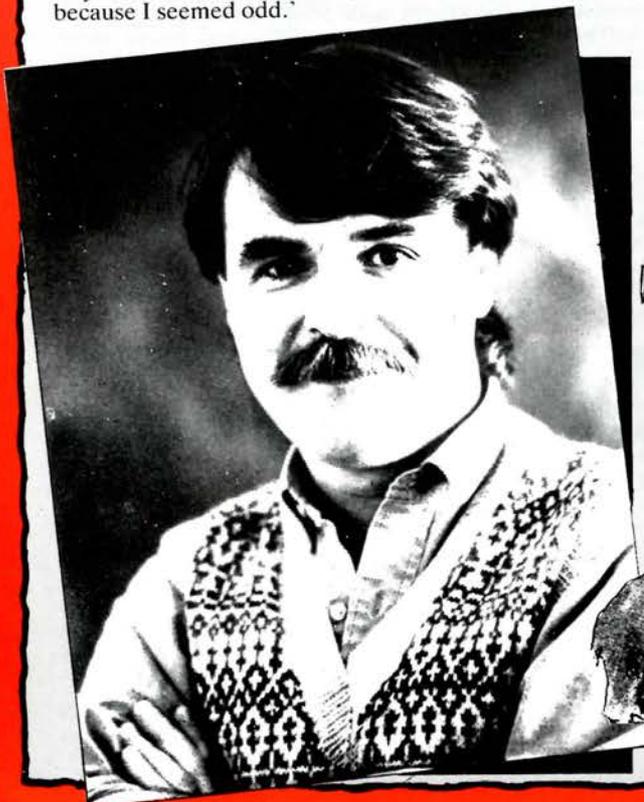
Macaulay's knack for turning challenges into triumphs, and for creating a mix

that works for him, has paid dividends in his career. He came to book illustration by an indirect route. When he was in high school, his family moved to Rhode Island. Macaulay studied architecture at Rhode Island School of Design, then spent a couple of years working for an interior design firm. But he had decided, even before he left school, that he did not want to practise architecture. He began looking around for other work.

Friends suggested he try illustration. 'I thought this was a possibility because I had always drawn. I started by going to textbook people and from that I got a year's worth of work, enough to quit the design business and just do freelance illustration. That's where my education in illustration began. I was drawing rabbits with clothes, turtles driving, dragons and elephants and whatever. Very little architecture. It was children's textbook stuff, reading books for little kids.'

Anxious for more interesting material, he began encouraging friends to write stories for him to illustrate. He also began writing stories of his own. Houghton Mifflin and other Boston publishers to whom he showed his early attempts were interested, but it wasn't until he came up with an idea for a book about a gargoyle 'beauty contest', in which a drawing of a cathedral figured prominently, that things began to click.

'At Houghton Mifflin they said, "We love the drawing of the cathedral, the



gargoyles you can forget. Tell us about the cathedral." That's why I do books about architecture. It had never occurred to me to go back to what I'd been studying and work from that. But once the suggestion was made, I found myself rereading the books I'd used in architecture school and drawing on that experience and that enthusiasm in developing that first story.'

The story, **Cathedral**, was published when Macaulay was twenty-six. It was a smashing success. Since then he has published fourteen more books, including **Pyramid**, **City**, **Castle**, **Underground**, and **Mill**. When asked how the attention he received from the first book affected his career, he notes the flexibility, the confidence and the resources that early success gave him. He also speaks of having had from the beginning a sense of responsibility to his audience to come up with good, interesting subjects.

And who does he see that audience as being? 'Everybody. I've given up even trying to define who they are. They seem to be anybody who's got any sort of curiosity, who likes the idea of picking up and reading a book, who enjoys looking at pictures, who enjoys learning about the world around him. I think they're all intelligent, curious people. Age has nothing to do with that. The material, because it's mostly non-fiction, and because it comprises things that people of all ages are interested in, whether it's machines or buildings or whatever, crosses age lines. If you talk about things and illustrate them in a direct, straightforward way, then there is no reason why a nine-year-old and a fifty-year-old aren't both going to get something out of the book, on their own levels.'

So how did he move from buildings to the machines of his latest book **The Way Things Work**? 'At the suggestion of an English publisher, Christopher David of Dorling Kindersley. About five years ago he said, "We've been asked to do a book about machines for a German book club. Would you be interested in working on it?"' A year later the project was under way. A technical writer, a researcher, and an editor worked with Macaulay on the book.

The result was a '100% team effort,' Macaulay says. 'What I bring to the book, I think, is primarily the visual side of it, and the playfulness that softens the material. I didn't have to go to the library and spend lots of time researching because Neil Ardley and David Burnie did all that for me. They fed me the information, taught me about the machines so that I could do what I do best which is the visual translation.'

Reviewers have commented on how few technical errors the book contains. Macaulay attributes this to the fact that 'everybody on the team had a strength and everybody was encouraged to work with those strengths.' And because there were four people working on the book it was possible to complete it in a remarkably short period of time.

Macaulay admits that during the last four months of the project he 'worked like a dog'. He is a disciplined worker who gets to his studio by 8.00 and works until 5.30 every weekday. 'I have never had a problem forcing myself to sit down and do work on a book. I do put things off, I'm a procrastinator in the early stages because I really do need to see that final deadline. But once it becomes real then I just bear down and crank out the stuff and really stay with it.'

He enjoys the freedom that working on his own brings. He has a stereo system in his studio and can play the music he likes - Mozart in the morning when he is developing ideas, Benny Goodman and the Rolling Stones in the afternoon - without worrying about anyone else's preferences. But his gregariousness does require an outlet. 'Working alone in the studio is terrific but it has its drawbacks. You do start talking to yourself after a while.'

For many years now, to balance the solitary nature of his work, he has taught illustration. 'The sharing and interaction that goes on (in the classroom) is really wonderful - as wonderful for me as I hope it is good and useful for the students.' This spring Macaulay is teaching at his own college. He has also taught at other universities, and with younger students in high school and junior high school.

Another way he avoids talking to himself is to 'go to lunch fairly frequently - not fairly frequently during the same day, although that's not a bad idea,' and occasionally brainstorms with one or another friend from the School of Design. 'One of my best friends is a painter and I will sometimes show him a drawing I'm working on and get comments.' Through another friend he found his present studio.

The studio is as elegantly whimsical as a Macaulay drawing. It is in a small clapboard box of a building with an elaborate Italianate facade painted bubblegum pink and mint green. It is an anomaly in Warren, Rhode Island, a Yankee mill town full of classical eighteenth and nineteenth-century houses, located about twenty minutes south of Providence where Macaulay lives.

He chose this as his studio for several reasons. 'I liked the building. I liked the street, I liked the scale of this town. This is one of those towns that still has a very human scale to it. It's a working-class town for the most part, there are some wonderful old pieces of architecture here, some little lanes and alleys in addition to the main streets. Walking to the Post Office is something of an adventure.'

The building's history also appealed to Macaulay. At different times it had housed a soda fountain, a hat shop, a shop for refinishing furniture and apartments. For a while it was a Sons of Italy hall and boasted a pool table on the second floor.

Although the building was basically sound when Macaulay bought it, it needed extensive renovation. The second storey was divided into three rooms and the floor was covered with cement. Now the floors are painted a deep blue, the woodwork a soft shade of maroon. Over the drafting table, which dominates the first floor, is suspended a rack of pencils a yard long. There are shelves full of art books and an Encyclopedia Britannica. Drawings by students and friends cover the walls. There is also a cluster of sketches by Piranesi, whose series on prisons, Macaulay says, influenced his work.

The second floor is arranged less like a studio than a large sitting room. There are comfortable armchairs and a sofa. Macaulay goes up there to write. On the shelves, there is a toy collection which includes an impressive number of lead soldiers.

These are not his own toys from childhood. Many of those were necessarily left behind when he and his family moved to the United States. Others disappeared over the years as toys are wont to do. 'It's the memories of soldiers from childhood and the memories of steam engines that I grew up with in Lancashire that accounts for some of the stuff that's up there. The fact that I like soldiers is because of that. The reason that I have toys up here at all, the little cars and all that, is because I did have them as a kid. And they vanished.'

Although Macaulay has spent most of his life in the United States he still considers himself an Englishman. His wife Ruth, a former children's book editor at Collins, is English. He retains his English citizenship, and visits England frequently. 'When I'm in England I still feel remarkably at home. It has to do with the scale. It's the same reason I like being in Warren. Or Providence, for that matter. They are bay cities that still cling to a human scale. The architecture, the streets and so on, distances between things that you can still do on foot. I feel very much at home in England because of the scale, more than anything else.'

David Macaulay was interviewed by Mary Jo Foley.

Photographs by Jan Bindas, courtesy of Houghton Mifflin.

The Books

Castle, 0 00 195128 9, £5.95; 0 00 192158 4, £3.95 pbk

Cathedral, 0 00 192150 9, £5.95; 0 00 192160 6, £3.95 pbk

City, 0 00 192151 7, £5.95; 0 00 192157 6, £3.95 pbk

Mill, 0 00 195545 4, £5.95

Pyramid, 0 00 195660 4, £5.95; 0 00 192159 2, £3.95 pbk

Underground, 0 00 195850 X, £5.95

All published by Collins

The Way Things Work, Dorling Kindersley, 0 86318 323 9, £15.00

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

Welcome, Little Baby

Aliki, Picture Piper,
0 330 30561 1, £2.99

There are many picture books available about new babies – mainly dealing with the older child's jealousy, or potential jealousy of the new arrival.

Welcome, Little Baby is unusual because it manages to convey with great simplicity and charming pictures what the world must be like for the very new, very small baby. The text is simple and could be managed by beginner readers, used to recall what a child used to be like and also, of course, in preparation for a new baby.

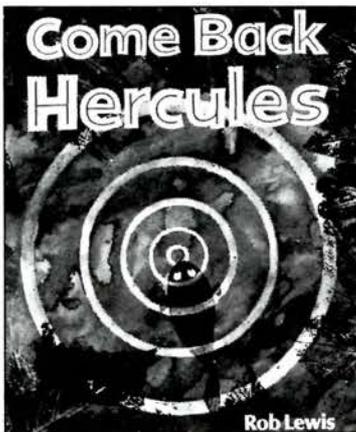


The illustrations are delicate and pretty, and lead from the tiny eating and sleeping infant to the possibility of finding out about the richness in the ordinary world and the safety of parents and home. MS

Come Back Hercules

Rob Lewis, Macdonald,
0 356 16523 X, £2.50

Hercules the goldfish lives, rather unusually, in the bathroom – his bowl strategically placed with a good view of the shower curtain patterned with goldfish like himself. Tired of the unresponsive shower curtain fish, Hercules makes a bid for freedom and dives into the loo. He travels down the drains and sewers in to a river



and on to the sea and some dangerous adventures. He finds himself at last in a little rock pool, is rescued by two children and taken home to reside happily ever after in their large fish tank with a goldfish called Julia.

Given that small children are often extremely curious about loos and what happens to the contents, this verse form story should help solve some of the mystery! It's also fun. Definitely an unusual but welcome addition to any collection. MS

Fire Engines

Anne Rockwell, Picture Puffins, 0 14 050.685 3,
£2.25

Here is a very good book filled with facts about fire engines. It shows how fire engines are maintained, the equipment they carry, how the ladders are raised, what the firemen wear – and how the water comes from the hydrant to the hoses to be sprayed on the fire.

The bright, bold illustrations complement the simple text and make this a most useful and interesting book to have available for this age group. MS

Lights Off Lights On

Anelise Taylor, Oxford,
0 19 272193 3, £1.95

A reassuring little book that explains that ordinary things look different in the darkness. When Nicky goes to bed he thinks there is someone behind the door, but it's only his dressing gown! A large spider hanging from the ceiling becomes a pattern on the wall when the light goes on. Monsters turn out to be socks and slippers, a ghost is really a coat and hat; there's nothing outside but trees and the wind. A good selection of pictures showing that it really is quite safe to fall asleep. MS

A Bundle of Birds

Dorothy Butler, ill. Lyn Kriegler, Picture Puffins,
0 14 050.860 0, £2.50

A lovely book to look at and enjoy whatever your age. All the pages feature birds, some of them unusual ones with names children may not have heard before. Visual and verbal treats combine with opportunities for learning to count and categorise.

A book to stimulate interest in different sorts of birds while extending language and experience. Highly recommended. MS

The Proud and Fearless Lion

Ann and Reg Cartwright, Beaver,
0 09 955470 4, £2.50

Powerful illustrations married to a strong moral tale makes this book immediately appealing to children. The lion's arrogance is tamed by the kindness and consideration of those he had previously treated badly. When, through his own folly, he catches a very bad cold, his true friends help him. In return, when they are trapped by hunters, he comes straight to the rescue. JS

Henry's Exercises

0 416 86710 3

Henry's Aeroplane

0 416 86740 5

Rodney Peppé, Magnet,
£2.50 each



Henry, the toy elephant, is an old favourite and this set is all the more welcome in the larger format. Henry's adventures as he tries to get in and fly his new aeroplane are fun but the best of the series has to be **Henry's Exercises**. Henry's struggle to get fit, using his chair for exercising, has appealed to every child in my classes over the years – and all the adults around! His antics as he goes on, off, over, under, up and down the chair are hilarious and Peppé's superbly spare illustrations match the dry humour perfectly. JS

Infant/Junior

The Trouble with Gran

Babette Cole, Picture Lions, 0 00 662873 7,
£2.25

Hurray! Another funny book by Babette Cole, this time about Gran – and she's an ALIEN! It's a real romp with lots of creepy crawly creatures supporting Gran as she

behaves outrageously on the OAP outing (they 'don't suspect a thing!'). She ends up taking them all on a space journey in the bus shelter, getting back in time to feed the cat – and then start a travel agency in the garage!

This is the latest in a line of funny, happy, exciting, unpredictable stories which are great fun for all ages. MS

Mac the Macaroni

Margaret Andrew and Tracey Lewis, Macdonald,
0 356 13734 1, £2.50

A home is best story featuring a penguin who dances off to adventure, discovers pink snow and a glacier and reaches the sea. Meeting an enormous elephant seal he has to pretend



to be dead in case he is eaten up! When a helicopter arrives to photograph the elephant seal, Mac is nearly captured but he escapes and finally reaches his own beautiful bay and all his penguin friends. Thankful to be back, Mac joins in more normal penguin pursuits.

I enjoyed reading this story very much. Informative and amusing, it romps along with Mac in and out of new and dangerous situations to a happy conclusion. MS

The Greedy Little Cobbler

Tony Ross, Beaver, 0 09 964260 3, £2.50

Again, not a beginner's book, this Tony Ross' retelling of fairy tales requires a certain ability to 'read' complex pictures and to recognise the slyness of the humour. This, I think, is an original tale (although it could well be 'Trad. Anon' from its style) but it needs a practised eye and ear.

I enjoyed the plot – a parable about the dangers of relying on the rich and famous to support the small businessman – and liked the pleasant, conversational flow of the story. The children found plenty to discuss after listening to it and the fluent readers have enjoyed reading it for themselves. LW

No Prize or Presents for Sam

Thelma Lambert, Young Puffins, 0 14 03.2718 5, £1.75

Two stories about eight-year-old Sam which also address contemporary problems. Sam is a very realistic child who deals with the problem of the run-down battery hen farm by buying a hen from it and restoring it to health. In the process he has a lot of fun – and so do the readers.

In the second story the problems of Sam's family (he lives with his Auntie and Uncle, there are no parents on the scene) when Auntie loses her job as a school dinner lady lead to some resourceful plans as Sam tries to earn enough money to help out with Christmas. How he succeeds, with the help of his wheelchair-bound friend Bill, relies a little on stretched credibility and the fortuitous breakdown of the school heating system but there is much entertainment along the way.

Cheerful, positive stories, ideal for children of six to eight who are moving onto novels for the first time. LW

The Sad Story of Veronica Who Played the Violin

David McKee, Beaver, 0 09 954810 0, £2.50

I must admit to liking David McKee's work best when he is at his most simple. Not Now,



Bernard and the King Rollo stories manage to suggest such a lot in so little that they seem to me to be masterpieces of storytelling. **Veronica** seems to lack something by comparison. The somewhat longer and more complex story doesn't leave the same scope for speculation and debate.

Having said that, however, we did enjoy the story of how Veronica learnt to play the violin and her sad end as a meal for a lion, a deaf lion at that, thus explaining why 'the streets are not full of happy, dancing people'. LW

Teeny Tiny

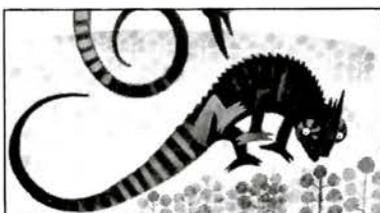
Jill Bennett, ill. Tomie de Paola, Oxford, 0 19 272194 1, £1.95

This version of the well-known story must become another classic! It has been requested again and again and again... I know it off by heart! The teeny tiny woman finds a teeny tiny bone in the graveyard and thinks it might make good soup – although both her cat and dog have other ideas. She takes it home and puts it ready in her cupboard, totally unaware that strange ghostly figures are following her. In the middle of the night she hears a teeny tiny voice coming from... the cupboard! JS

Crafty Chameleon

Mwenye Hadithi, ill. Adrienne Kennaway, Picture Knight, 0 340 48698 8, £2.50

Adrienne Kennaway won the Kate Greenaway Medal for her illustration of this story.



Judging from the moments of hushed silence that was the children's response to it, the combination of strong, economic text and the powerful illustration merited it. The story of the chameleon's plan to teach the

leopard and the crocodile a well-deserved lesson has the age-old appeal of the underdog winning through, merely by using his wits against their might! JS

Titchywitch

Jean Baylis, Beaver, 0 09 957210 9, £2.50

Titchywitch's family, forced to leave their nice cave as their part of the forest was cut down to build a motorway, move into the house next door to Sally Smith. Titchywitch can't cope with the move and with the necessity of adapting to human ways. Sitting in the garden turning her troubles into frogs, she meets Sally. Their new-found friendship is cemented by the ensuing adventure as they borrow her mother's broomstick and Titchywitch discovers that the frogs have vanished – as have her troubles! JS

Where do the Wicked Witches Live?

Juliet and Charles Snape, Picture Corgi, 0 552 52504 9, £2.25



Dennis sets out to discover where witches live. As he searches over the hills and beyond the trees, he doesn't know that wicked witches, sleek cats and all manner of creepy creatures are observing him all the way! Cleverly concealed in the illustrations, they are waiting to be discovered by the observant reader. A great success with Infants and Lower Junior children. JS

A Book of Mice

Compiled by Rosemary Debnam, ill. David McKee, Beaver, 0 09 956830 6, £1.99

Mice being second only to pigs as popular children's book beasts, this anthology of mousey prose and poetry will be welcomed by teachers for reading aloud and older children to read to themselves. Some of the contents are rather predictable, 'The Lion and the Mouse' and 'I think mice are rather nice' for instance, but several were new to me and there are one or two imaginative extracts from

longer novels such as **The Wizard of Oz** and **Mrs Frisby and the Rats of NIMH**. A good, varied selection. LW

The Boy Who Turned into a Goat

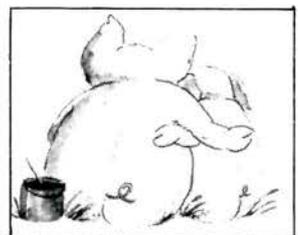
James Riordan, Young Piper, 0 330 30486 0, £1.99



The six tales in this collection revolve around magical transformations and, with the exception of 'Old Mrs Vinegar', are comparatively little known. Though written with new solo readers in mind, the tellings have the resonance of the oral tradition and read aloud very well. The format of the book is most approachable: well spaced print and plenty of illustrations, almost one for every double spread. I was puzzled though at the use of Babette Cole's illustration for the cover: her jokey style does not truly reflect the tenor of the stories. JB

The Pig's Wedding

Helme Heine, Pocket Puffins, 0 14 03.3127 1, £1.95



A quirky and humorous tale about the pigs who decide to paint smart clothes on themselves when invited to a wedding. There's the inevitable rainstorm, of course. It's splendidly recounted, and there's a fine cumulative sense to the story which will help novice readers of six to eight. Read the last page, and look at the picture, to see how skilled picture book making can teach youngsters how to pace their reading. CM

Mrs Simkin and the Magic Wheelbarrow

Linda Allen, Young Piper, 0 330 30712 6, £1.50

One of the novel 'Flipper' titles: you start from one end and read one story and then turn the book over to read

another. Here both tales (they appeared first in Hamish Hamilton's 'Cartwheels' series) feature Mrs Simkin and her husband, a somewhat eccentric pair. A wheelbarrow becomes the vehicle for some flights of fancy in the title story and in the other tale a large mushroom which appears in the back garden provides the means for some divergent thinking and improvisation for the couple.



Having had her fortune told, Wendy proceeds to fulfil all the old witch's predictions with some highly amusing results. Her departure on holiday with the 'Dark Blue Stranger' provides her fellow villagers with a welcome respite from her misguided magic. An enjoyable read-aloud if you can bear the awful puns, otherwise leave it to independent readers from about seven.

JB

Private Zoo

Georgess McHargue, ill. Michael Foreman, 0 14 03.3128 X

ABC Zoo

Detlif Kersten, 0 14 03.3130 1

Pocket Puffins, £1.95 each

Two books with a zoo theme in the popular Pocket Puffin

From Private Zoo



Kersten's alphabet book goes beyond the conventional and has some witty word play and poetry making. Here's a taster: 'The sinuous snake slithers over the rocks. She doesn't wear shoes and she doesn't wear socks.'

Sixes to eights enjoy each of these. CM

Spid

Ursula Moray Williams, ill. David McKee, Beaver, 0 09 959260 6, £1.75

Spid crawls up the plug hole and is welcomed by Henry in whose dressing-gown pocket he makes a temporary home. Then, by being useful, he proceeds to win the affections of a houseful of somewhat suspicious adults. There are some amusing incidents but I found that the whole thing began to drag well before the end. Solo readers will enjoy David McKee's comical illustrations but it is a pity that there aren't more of them.

JB

Pigs Might Fly

Emily Rodda, ill. Noella Young, Puffins, 0 14 03.2634 0, £1.75

This writer's *Something Special* is one of the best stories I know for six to eights, showing them how the numinous and the magical lie within the ordinary and the everyday. This new one has more pace and vigour, but the writer's ability to create a story 'world' is still strong, never fey.

Rachel just wishes that one day *something* (anything!) would happen – a common childhood emotion? It does – when pigs do begin to fly, and the world is turned topsy-turvy. A beautifully unfolded tale from an illuminating, fresh-voiced writer.

CM



Great fun for those readers who need the support of plenty of illustrations but at the same time are ready to tackle something other than a picture book format. JB

The Witch's Funnybone

Ralph Wright, Magnet, 0 416 11922 0, £1.99

This is the second book about young Wendy Witch, now a fully-qualified witch, whose exploits stretch the toleration of her friends to the limit.

Junior/Middle

Tumbleweed

Dick King-Smith, Puffins, 0 14 03.2547 6, £1.99

This hilarious romp is something of a departure for Dick King-Smith featuring as it does, one Sir Tumbleweed, a most reluctant – at least in the beginning – knight from Merrie England. However, with the help of a witch, a unicorn and a lion, this engaging character undergoes a startling personality change and proves himself the equal of champion jouster, Sir Basil the Beastly, not to mention a fearsome-looking dragon, and finally comes to the rescue of a damsel in distress – this final feat providing a nice twist to the tale. Tremendous fun to read aloud as well as for individual reading. If you are looking for something different to try with a junior class, then look no further. JB

Kirsty Knows Best

Annalena McAfee, ill. Anthony Browne, Magnet, 0 416 09202 0, £2.50

This is the sort of imagination-stretching book that works at all sorts of levels with all ages.

The story of ordinary, drab Kirsty who daydreams her way out of tedium and bullying is interesting in its own right. It's given extra value by the prose that is used for the prosaic and the rhyme that distinguishes the fanciful. And then, of course, there's Anthony Browne. As usual his pictures extend the text into a whole new world of imagery and allusion. Take just one page, on which Kirsty imagines herself travelling to school by rickshaw pulled by the school bully. The scene seems to be a willow pattern plate until close attention shows the Loch Ness monster, a wind surfer, Popeye, and so on and on.



Something else to find on almost every page, including a gorilla and the brooding presence of the bully, makes one extraordinarily aware of the murkier aspects of the everyday and the liberating influence of fantasy. Highly recommended. LW

The Dragon Box

Barbara Willard, ill. George Buchanan, Macdonald, 0 356 13949 2, £1.99

Thomas' Uncle Ned, the fascinating kind of relation that every child should have, comes home from sea with spellbinding tales . . . and a dragon box. A skilfully spun tale by a mistress of her art. Sevens to nines enjoy being in on a joke just before the central character. Text and pictures work well together. CM

Alice Alone

Shirley Isherwood, ill. Jolyne Knox, Macdonald, 0 356 16521 3, £1.99

Delicately told story, which builds sensitively on the relationship between a young girl and her little brother.

When they're isolated in a farmhouse, Alice has to be resourceful in keeping little brother's fears (and questions) at bay.

This writer's skill is in telling the tale through the banter and dialogue between the two children. The pictures are enchanting. CM

Fred Frederick and Captain Hook

Denny Robson, ill. David West, Macdonald, 0 356 16450 0, £1.99

A smashing story, splendidly illustrated, in which nondescript, not very good at anything Fred, gets to triumph playing Captain Hook in the school play. This writer can get inside children's heads, catching well the excitement of 'taking part'. Clever blending of the everyday (having to try on costumes) and the exotic (he is Captain Hook when performing!). Don't miss this one. CM

Grandma Cadbury's Trucking Tales

Dianne Bates, ill. Kevin Burgemeestre, Angus & Robertson Bluegum, 0 207 15877 0, £2.50

'My Grandma drives a semi-trailer called Tootsie. Tootsie's a thirty-six tonne Kenworth with bogie drive wheels and power steering.' How's that for getting nines to elevens switched into a story? They will not be disappointed by these ten independent tales involving Cadbury, his redoubtable Gran and her exploits on the road.

Zany tastes of Australian culture and humour and some sparky dialogue. Read one or two aloud... then see. CM

Fables

Arnold Lobel, Picturemac, 0 333 48090 2, £2.95



The good writer's power is in taking stories from a traditional format and investing them with freshness and vigour. Here, Lobel spins fables with wit and sharply pointed morals. The young enjoy the sharp characterisation. Eights and nines I shared these with made up their own, inventing afresh under Lobel's tutoring! That is the kind of creation through language we're now implored to do! The pictures are stunning. CM

The Snow Spider

0 416 06492 2

Emlyn's Moon

0 416 10222 0

Jenny Nimmo, Magnet, £1.95 each

Seen separately or as a pair, award-winning Jenny Nimmo's contribution to the fantasy library is considerable. **The Snow Spider** has recently had a TV screening which will ensure its popularity.

The 'realness' of the child characters, despite their close access to ancient magical powers, is no mean feat, especially Gwyn in the first book, who so unwillingly accepts his birthright of Welsh magic and then uses the odd gifts from his eccentric, gaudy grandma to solve the unnatural disappearance of his sister, lured, as he discovered, to a world of ice and silver, where evil is latent.

That same world threatens to snatch his cousin Emlyn in the second book, where family enmity and moon-struck magic conspire to create a devastating conclusion that Gwyn must again avert and for which he needs the powers of Nia Lloyd, Nia-in-the-middle, Nia-can't-do-nothing, who has yet to discover her own unique gift.

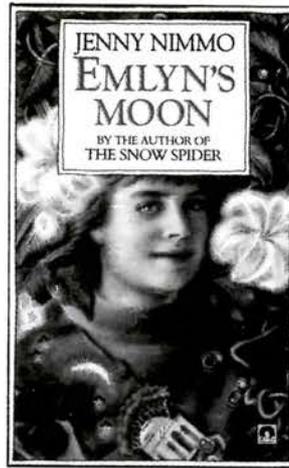
Jenny Nimmo gradually piles layer upon fine layer in both stories, weaving gentle, intriguing spells, which should captivate most imaginative youngsters and which I suspect will read aloud well. DB

The Marzipan Pig

Russell Hoban, ill.

Quentin Blake, Puffins, 0 14 03.2683 9, £1.75

Enchanting tale involving a marzipan pig that gets eaten by a mouse. As always in this writer's work, there's depth of feeling underneath the surface whimsy. Here, loneliness and the longing for love and company are the themes. It's like an extended poem: lucid and life-enhancing. A lovely one to read aloud to all primary ages - Blake cover and pictures are a bonus. CM



Jacob Two-Two and the Dinosaur

Mordecai Richler, ill.

Jon Riley, Puffins, 0 14 03.2317 1, £1.75

Readers of **Jacob Two-Two Meets the Hooded Fang** will not be disappointed in this new tale in which Jacob's pet lizard turns into dinosaur Dippy. When pursued by the manically power-hungry Prime Minister, there's a hilarious sequence of events. There's wit, style and pace in the writing. This author's real skill is in dialogue, and seven to nines (who usually know how to pronounce the dinosaur names!) will warm to this. CM

Perkins: The Cat who was More than a Friend

Linda Yeatman, ill.

Adriano Gon, Hippo, 0 590 76004 1, £1.50

A theme which could be easily dealt with in a twee manner is sensitively handled. A blind boy is befriended by, and comes to depend upon, a kitten. When there's a threat that the boy and his 'guide' may be parted, there's little blurring of the harsh edges. Well-rounded characters and some sensibly-paced action. A percentage of the profits to go to the admirable National Library for the Handicapped Child. CM

The Ghosts of Hungryhouse Lane

Sam McBratney, ill. David Farris, Hippo, 0 590 70972 0, £1.95

Here's a new twist to an old tale! A houseful of resident ghosts are frightened by a gang of malevolent children.



Lively, sparky, literate writing, best suited to nines to elevens, I think. Different child characters are given clear personalities, and the ghoulies are a lovable, if pathetic, lot. CM

All the Way to Wits' End

Sheila Greenwald, ill.

Shoo Rayner, Puffins, 0 14 03.2561 1, £1.75

A splendid story for eights to elevens about Drucilla, the kind of plucky, assertive heroine, in the mould of Ramona, that American women writers depict so well. Dru is fed up with the patterned and predictable nature of her life - and with the adults who are a stodgy lot. She decides to make some changes, and learns that maybe the things she takes for granted do have some value. A smashing cast of characters, not least Dru's quirky relations and her tomboy friends. CM

Middle/Secondary

Toby Lived Here

Hilma Wolitzer, Farrar, Strauss & Giroux Sunburst, 0 571 12099 7, £2.95

Potentially a sentimental story but this one works and it's written well too. Toby (a girl) and her younger sister have first to face the mental breakdown of their mother grieving for dead husband/father and then the trauma of moving to foster parents. There's some nice play with words (foster parents must be called Foster? 'unstable'

carries the idea of wild horses) which is all part of a sensitivity to emotions and language which make for a moving story. A little more expensive than the norm but well worth having in libraries and book boxes. AJ

Phoebe

0 00 672979 7

Daphne

0 00 672980 0

Cassie

0 00 672981 9

Lydia

0 00 672982 7

Marilyn Kaye, Lions Teen Tracks 'Sisters', £2.25 each

Four sisters, 11 to 14, each with a separate story and, of course, the interconnection of family, characters and place. The sisters are all recognisable types: the quiet one; the glamorous, easily deceived one; the serious, campaigning one. And each story covers an issue, appropriate to the readership, sometimes they stretch to two. We have



Phoebe, 11, finding her friends interested only in boys and clothes while she doesn't want to grow up; Daphne, 12, trying to assert her own individuality; Cassie, 13, making a fool of herself by muddled judgements about friends; and Lydia, 14, campaigning for equal rights. Through each runs a cosy sameness. Attractively packaged, they are clearly designed exactly for their market. There's little in them to stretch to one book, let alone four, but they'll go happily in the book box and library and keep some readers going for an hour or two. AJ

The Landfill

David Leney, Puffins, 0 14 03.2663 4, £1.75
A clever idea carried off very well indeed. Danny Vickers finds that someone has been in the old car in the landfill tip. There's some tapes and a message, a bargain: in exchange for listening to a story on the tape you must record your own. So, a great excuse for linking some wonderfully vivid and very varied stories, all marked by the apparent simplicity of good spoken narrative. And, connecting them, there is also Danny's seeming inability to complete the bargain because of his stutter. It's a good read, a good collection of stories to read from and a great stimulus for oral work and storytelling by any group or class. AJ

Dracula

Bram Stoker, abridged by Doris Dickens, Armada Classics, 0 00 693321 1, £1.95

The experience of not usually enthralled 14-year-olds being held by another abridgement of this story taught me its power, even though I didn't come to enjoy it or admire it any the more. It articulates what seem to be basic fears and this is so well-known a story now that many children will probably love this version too. There never seems to be enough 'horror' writing to sustain a great many readers. It could be in book boxes and libraries and will be a very popular read-aloud. AJ

The Third Eye

Joan de Hamel, Puffins, 0 14 03.2159 4, £1.75

A real adventure yarn. Maori rights and conservation are the only changes in a very old form which I can remember reading piles of years ago. A big company is going to develop land once settled by Maoris. After a little confusion of character (the writer has a few too many bobbing about at the beginning) we settle down to the plot of what's the scientist doing so secretively in the next valley and will the old Maori prophecy come true and the developers fail to gain the land? To answer those questions you have to read up

to the final page. I wish I'd discovered the glossary of Maori words before I read the story. AJ

The Well

Gene Kemp, Puffins, 0 14 03.2678 2, £1.75

This is the author's own childhood, seen sharply by a skilful writer through the warmth of memory. The scenes of family, farm life are vividly brought to life through the narration of the young girl, who struggles hard to be good. There is a lovely sense of family, the variety of individuals and the ways that growing up is this mixture of people, place and time. It's short, but not slight, and I'd hope for more. Something that will last for a lot of readers and its short sections are ideal for reading from. AJ

Games

Robin Klein, Puffins, 0 14 03.2777 0, £1.99

A mixture of ghost story and awful girls mistreating a weak sensitive one. It works in the main, at least the ghost part - isolated, old wooden house, strange noises and the knowledge that there's been a death here before. Kirsty's aunt is away from the house for the weekend and this seems like a good opportunity to have a wild party. Kirsty and Genevieve are attractive and very bitchy and somehow, unbelievably, Patricia Miggs has been invited along. In place of the party there is a seance, then spooky happenings and some nastiness from the evil duo, before Patricia asserts herself. The ending undercuts all the ghostly bits in a neat twist. AJ

King of the Cloud Forests

Michael Morpurgo, Piper, 0 330 30560 3, £2.25

Strangely old-fashioned this. Stories of missionaries in China, yetis and old scientists seem to suggest another age of children's books. It's good stuff and it works as Ashley becomes the king of the yetis, creatures like Swift's Houyhnhnms, gentle and noble. This section is the core of the book, framed by the harsher 'real' world, it seems like an elusive dream, a lost Eden where Ashley is mistaken for an earlier human, whose tobacco tin, penknife and picture have become totems. Finally he makes the decision to leave and eventually traces that earlier 'King', now an old man, a respected and famous scientist who can at last share his loss too. AJ

Dogsbody

Diana Wynne Jones, Methuen Teens, 0 416 11612 4, £1.99

An old favourite which it's good to see back in up-to-date

form. I think this is a great way into Diana Wynne Jones' books, not so esoteric as others yet it packs the punch of her best fantasy. Sirius, the dog star, is sentenced to a period on Earth as a dog, for apparent murder and the loss of a powerful weapon. It is the simple notion which livens the wonderfully warm story of this dog, struggling with its new form. So that's why it can't control its tail, why its urges so get the better of its body. In talking with cats, the Sun, Earth and others, this naturalness is preserved and seems only an extension of what we can see in these animals normally. The fantasy is powerful too, physically sharp, and grows so well out the real-life story of Katherine, whose pet Sirius is for a while. AJ

Witchery Hill

Welwyn Wilton Katz, Angus & Robertson Bluegum, 0 207 15840 1, £2.95

I am left contemplating after reading this whether we can be seen to encourage youngsters to read novels where very authentic-sounding witchcraft practices are allowed such a high profile and call it children's literature. I'm not talking about dotty old dears in black casting spells that backfire, but very ordinary seeming folks who club pups to death on isolated altars, scream viperish chants of devil invocation and are intent on sacrificing a young girl, all described in vivid detail. Do we include Dennis Wheatley in class libraries? Isn't this the witchcraft equivalent of soft porn?

The basic plot is gripping. Undoubtedly good in the form of 14 and 12-year-old Mike and Lisa triumphs fairly convincingly at the end over wicked stepmother and her coven. But I'd advise checking it out before approving it for school use. DB

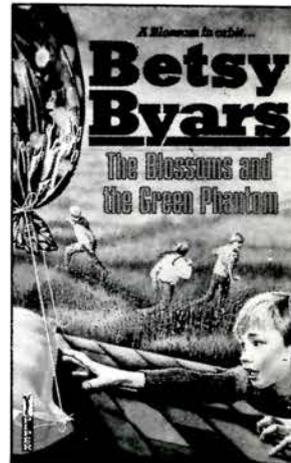
The Hideaway

Jamila Gavin, Magnet, 0 416 10212 3, £1.99

The way Peter is treated by his neurotic, pushy mother almost amounts to a childline case.



Their move away from his casual, free-wheelin' father to a country village compounds Peter's dilemmas until he makes two friends and discovers a secret den, an ideal bomb-shelter in case of the holocaust he is convinced is imminent. When it does come it's in a long white envelope - his school report! Then the cave becomes a sanctuary and leads Peter to learn about love and living for the present from a wise hippy. Definitely not for those who crave excitement and can't stretch credibility. DB



The Blossoms and the Green Phantom

Betsy Byars, Piper, 0 330 30085 7, £1.99

The third in a quartet, this one mingles loyalty to family with the recognition of individual self-worth in a way that is so distinctly, masterfully Betsy Byars that you could spot it from at least a million paces.

Junior's latest invention, a UFO made from junk, needs the whole Blossom family and their friends to make it fly, and fly it must if Junior is to feel that he is not a failure. But when the UFO sails towards old man Benson's hen-house, then family honour is also put to the test, not helped by worries over what has happened to Pap and Mud, the dog! DB

Dominic

William Steig, Farrar, Straus & Giroux Sunburst, 0 571 12098 9, £2.95

Heroic Dominic the dog stands for the wholesome, chivalric virtues of honesty, courage, goodwill, generosity and sympathy. As he adventures along the road towards his ultimate destiny he aids those in adversity, gives succour to the dying, brings joy to the troubled-in-spirit and rights the wrongs perpetrated by the dastardly Doodsey Gang. There's a quirky, cartoon-like quality in this book, which will endear it to younger solo readers, but its episodic nature would make it an excellent and rewarding story to share by reading it aloud. It's a 'good' book in many ways. DB

Older Readers

Don't Blame the Music

Caroline B Cooney,
Methuen Teens,
0 416 10242 5, £1.95

Strictly for Laughs

Ellen Conford, Lions
Teen Tracks,
0 00 672854 5, £1.95

Binding Ties

C S Adler, Pan
Horizons, 0 330 30467 4,
£2.25

Three books which would cut little ice with teachers as class texts or GCSE readers but which do offer third, fourth and fifth years – probably girls – membership of the often exclusive readers' 'club'. Reading a book is the first step; reading a book with doorways into more complex fiction could well be the second. So, in ascending order: **Don't Blame the Music** contains some of the most dreadful rhyming couplets I've ever read – try 'lonesome/known some' and 'worrying/currying' for size! The book revolves around two sisters, Susan the conformist and Ashley, failed rock star, whose return wreaks havoc on home and family. It's melodramatic, sensationalist, predictable – Susan rejects preppy Anthony for sullen but sensitive Whit, aspiring rock musician, for example – but it contains insights into teenage male behaviour, tolerance, failure of parent/children relationships.

Strictly for Laughs more ambitiously aims to chronicle Pete and Joey's attempts to develop their own local radio programme after an opening is provided on the station by Pete's uncle. It's eternal triangle stuff – Joey's manic sense of humour hides her love for Pete whom she has to win from the glamorous Dinah – but there is sufficient thought given to boy/girl relationship issue to make reading the book worthwhile.

Finally, **Binding Ties** examines another ill-matched relationship – this time between Anne and Kyle – who is, inevitably, handsome and rebellious. Anne's family reacts in a variety of ways – all of them censorious – and Anne determines to leave home and follow Kyle. Eventually, she is disillusioned and returns – yes, you've guessed – sadder but wiser! Anne's internal struggle offers insights and points of contact and empathy to the reader.

VR

The Warriors of Taan

Louise Lawrence, Lions
Teen Tracks,
0 00 672853 7, £2.25

Through the medium of fantasy epic Louise Lawrence

is exploring a great many fundamental problems of our society and times, such as the male/female role, the pros and cons of technological discovery, the politics of war and peace, and the true significance of personal power. It's strong, intricate stuff, not necessarily considered riveting by all but very thoughtful youngsters. The plot – young novice to the Sisterhood, sensing her destiny for greater things, comes into contact with Princeling, handicapped by severe conditioning, whose life must be turned around for his own good and that of his people, not to mention the future of the whole world – is a bit slow in unfolding and takes plenty of stickability. Maybe it's too ambitious in its scope to attract a wide audience.

DB

Slambash Wings of a Compo Gormer

Robert Leeson, Lions
Teen Tracks,
0 00 672793 X, £2.25

'You know how people sometimes get involved in their own fantasies and lose touch with the real world.' Little did the English teacher know Arnold's fantasy world had so intruded on his reality that Arnold and his fantasy hero, Replie Dornal, had effected a complete swap! Arnold Radleigh becomes embroiled in the skulduggery of the Slamboss in Klaptonia and Dornal with the yobs and Mr Boardman at Denfield Comp.

This book is an intriguing feast of remarkable challenges for bright fantasy readers. If they're to follow the fast, funny plot, they'll have to surmount first the new language that Leeson has created – a sort of hybrid Professor Stanley Unwin mixed with C.B. lingo – a Yonco, Wizzi Wang!

DB

In Summer Light

Zibby O'Neal, Lions
Teen Tracks,
0 00 672797 2, £1.95

Kate Brewer wants 'her own field to plough'. Tired of being catalogued as a part of her father's 'collection' and angry at her family's readiness to make endless emotional adjustments around his absorption in his work, she determines to acquire a project totally her own.

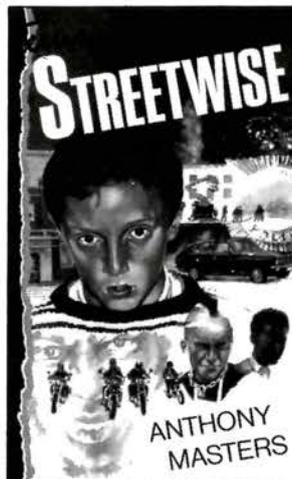
Yet her college study of **The Tempest** brings her, ironically, to the parallels between her father and Prospero. This awareness changes as her understanding of her father – at first resisted – develops through a reappraisal of her motives in opposing him. She sees how her own early success as an artist – passionately

wanting to please him – threatened him with a jealousy he had not expected.

The book is beautifully layered with exploration – the strands which enrich and explain Kate's increased knowledge of her father and of herself are teased out in the most sensitive way.

Unhappily, the many and detailed references to the art world may disenchant the casual reader – it is the more experienced fourth or fifth-year reader who will realise that the delicacy and expressiveness of such language is perfectly suited to the intricacies of the emotional life of young adulthood which O'Neal observes with poignancy and adroitness.

VR



Streetwise

Anthony Masters,
Methuen Teens,
0 416 10152 6, £1.95

The violent murder of Sam's policeman father opened up a can of worms for his family whereby facts best hidden surfaced, and vicious little punk creeps like Alfie and his cronies crawled out of the woodwork, backed by men in high positions, who could manipulate the weak to retain their power and avoid being exposed as crooks. It doesn't make a pretty subject.

Police corruption and racial prejudice are at the core of this very fast, tough novel, where aggression and fear dominate and infect young lives and where nobody can win against the enemy – violence in the streets.

DB

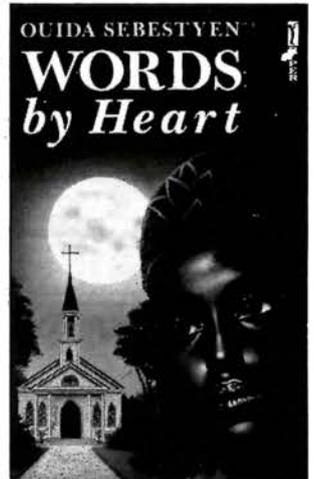
The Amazing and Death-Defying Diary of Eugene Dingman

Paul Zindel, Lions Teen
Tracks, 0 00 673152 X,
£2.25

'I just don't know where to begin to fix myself' – shades of Willy Loman in **Death of a Salesman** as 15-year-old Eugene anguishes over his

infatuation for Della, a fellow worker at a lakeside holiday hotel. His guru, an Indian washer-up, advises a reversal of Eugene's deep-seated tendency not to believe in himself and to be ashamed of his whole being. Then he might conquer the pain of unrequited love, love himself and fight back at his detractors, including the schizoid Bunker, Della's boyfriend. In Zindel, who isn't schizoid, especially parents? Here is the familiar bitter-sweet concoction of the bizarre, the neurotic and very humorous, comic understatement. This time the format is diary form with masses of contemporary references (fairly trans-Atlantic), but maybe the pace is a little slack in places. Fans will no doubt like it. **Pigman** is 21 years old this year, which just shows Zindel's staying power.

DB



Words by Heart

Ouida Sebestyen, Pan
Piper, 0 330 30484 4,
£2.25

This is a very powerful story, beautifully told in precise, spare language. It opens with Lena, the eldest daughter of the Sills family, competing in and winning a Bible quotation competition. In doing that, she shows her skill but she reveals much more of herself, her emotions, her pride, her sense of her own worth and she learns, too, a black girl beating a white boy, about prejudice. Those quotations are more than words to her, her struggles and learning are measured against such words, words embodied in her father. There are hard things to be faced in the book which are painful for Lena and for the reader too. Her achievement seems to be torn out suffering. It's an exceptional book. Read it and let/help groups or whole classes explore it.

AJ

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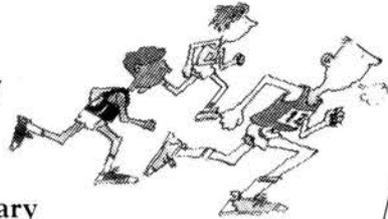
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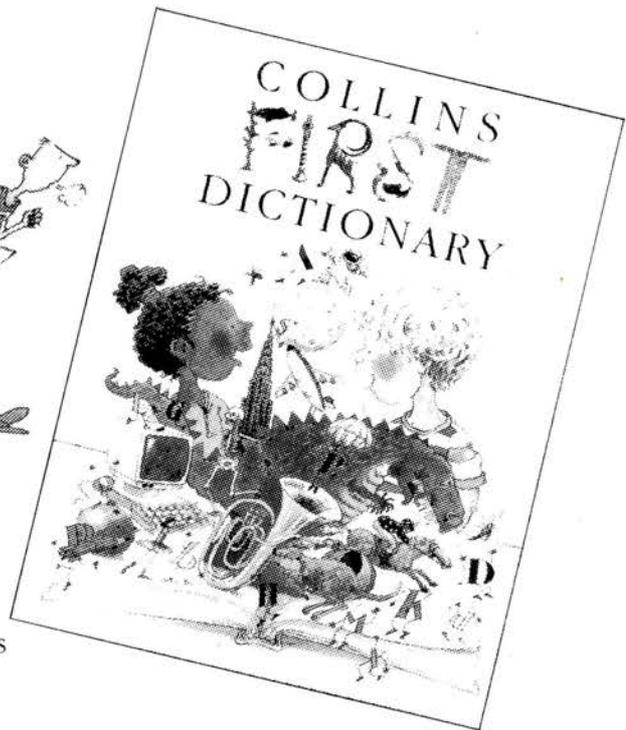
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WHO?

'Who,' asked my mother,
'helped themselves to the *new* loaf?'
My two friends and I
looked at her
and shrugged.

'Who,' questioned my mother,
'broke off the crust?'
Three pairs of eyes
stared at the loaf
lying on the kitchen table.

'Who,' demanded my mother,
'ate the bread?'
No one replied.
You could hear
the kitchen clock. Tick Tock.

And
even now I can taste it,
crisp, fresh, warm from the bakery,
and I'd eat it again
if I could find a loaf
like that, like that...

Wes Magee

Integrating the Core Curriculum

Some ideas for combining Mathematics, Science and English by problem-solving from picture books.

Setting out to make learning meaningful for children through problem-solving is not new; but during the last ten years it has been much discussed particularly in connection with Mathematics, Science and Technology in the primary curriculum. And, rumour has it, those commissioned to come up with ideas for the Standard Attainment Tests (SATs) in the National Curriculum are considering a problem-based approach.

What exactly is meant by problem-solving? It has become something of a buzz-word in education but one which in practice is often applied too narrowly only to 'design-make' technological activities or, in Mathematics, to 'computation in words'. This is to deny its real value as a thinking and working process which can be applied right across the primary curriculum. The potential for integration through problem-solving is huge (something to hang on to as we start rationing out time for curriculum coverage). To make the most of it though, it is necessary to recognise and understand which of the processes children go through in solving problems are common to all areas and which are distinctive to learning Mathematics, Science or other curriculum subjects – of this, more later.

Across the curriculum, the main difference between this and more 'traditional' learning experiences offered to children lies in the challenge to think and to resolve; the notion of 'right' answers is exchanged for the search for a satisfactory solution. There are, in many instances, no right answers and, in others, the possibility of many right answers (and wrong ones). This frees children to explore for themselves, without the constraint of 'one right answer' and without construing the task as trying to match what the teacher thinks. Through an essentially practical task children are put in a position which requires them to *apply knowledge and use skills*; in the process they may well also *acquire new knowledge and develop both skills and understanding*. Central to all this, of course, is talking and listening (50% of the English curriculum).

For children to engage with a problem, they must first be stimulated by the context in which it is introduced and feel a need or inclination to get involved. Secondly, it is important that the 'solver' acknowledges, recognises or identifies the 'problem'. Without these the child has no way into the problem and the processes of analysing, categorising, hypothesising, etc. which (at any level) are involved in its 'solution'. The most successful problems therefore are those which the children identify for themselves as they arise from what they are doing. Problems of this sort are 'real'. They should be seized when they occur. In practice, however, teachers (who cannot always be sure that the 'real' problem will arise) will choose to create situations or present problems for children to tackle. Stories in picture books offer a rich source of possibilities for this kind of stimulus-based problem-solving. The activities involved can lead to 'real' problems when the children take new directions of their own.

Working on problems arbitrarily invented from the events of the story, some might claim, is unrelated to the essential literary encounters with the text, which should be paramount. This view compartmentalises curriculum (not a helpful move) and underestimates the central importance of 'story' in all life and learning, particularly for children. Using published stories to explore Mathematics and Science offers children a way into learning which is natural and meaningful; the story context encourages children to think imaginatively and laterally, something they can be more reluctant to do in 'realistic' situations. In addition in taking on 'the problem' children become engaged imaginatively with the story and its characters, a process which for many enhances their experience of the book. Books used for problem-solving frequently become favourites for reading and talking about.

The Books

The picture books which were the starting point for the problems suggested here are by Ronda and David Armitage. Their stories are ideal for the purpose in that each one is essentially about a problem which the characters have to solve. In **The Lighthouse Keeper's Lunch** the problem is how to stop the greedy seagulls stealing Mr Grinling's lunch when Mrs Grinling sends it out to him from the cottage on the cliff. Even more dramatic, **The Lighthouse Keeper's Catastrophe** has Mr and Mrs Grinling locked out of the lighthouse (one key inside, the spare one lost). Night is coming, a storm is brewing: how will they get the lighthouse lamp switched on? **One Moonlit Night** poses a problem of communication between the two boys camping out in the garden and feeling a bit insecure, and dad asleep upstairs in the house. In **Ice Creams for Rosie** the problem is how to get fresh supplies of ice cream to the island when Rosie runs out of stock before the usual delivery date. Appealing illustrations, a strong storyline and (most of all) the humour that emerges from a skilful blend of text and pictures, combine to make these books 'work' across a wide age range.

Introducing the Problems

The problems can be introduced in different ways. The most straightforward is to read the story to the point where the problem occurs, or where it is about to be resolved; in **Catastrophe**, for instance, to the point where the only spare key sinks to the sea bed. 'There it lay amongst the rocks and the seaweed where only the octopus, the crab and other sea creatures would ever find it again.' How will Mr Grinling get into the lighthouse? Or read on through the unsuccessful attempts to the point where Mrs Grinling says 'I've got an idea – a perfectly brilliant idea.' What might it be?

The problems suggested here are also *extensions* of the story, involving the characters in new problems and could be posed after reading the whole story.

The Problems

The problems included here have been tried and tested in a number of classrooms and, although we have grouped them separately, there are many overlaps between Maths and Science in the activities. We have categorised the problems as:

open	– where the children are in control of the variables and the materials (the nearest thing to a 'real' problem)
semi-open	– where some of the variables and the materials are controlled by the teacher
closed	– where all the variables and the materials are given and the specific learning is deliberately defined by the teacher. Even a 'closed' problem can be presented as a challenge. In this way thinking and action work together to strengthen the learning experience.

We have also suggested the kind of mathematical or scientific processes involved, the ideas contained within the problems and the National Curriculum Attainment Targets (ATs) and Levels (as they stood in February) covered in these activities. Materials and equipment which you will need to provide are listed.

Problems are labelled for 'earlier' or 'later' stages of development but most are capable of adaptation as starting points for any children.

Into Practice

However the story and the problems are introduced, the ground rules for the activity are the same.

1. The children work in groups as a team.
2. It is made clear that no-one is going to help them or give them any answers. They are going to work 'like scientists and mathematicians in real life'.
3. Teachers' role is to encourage, help and remotivate by *asking questions* to trigger a thought process.
4. Children are encouraged to articulate their problem and report (and evaluate) possible solutions to others in the class (who may be working on the same or different problems).

MATHEMATICAL PROBLEMS

'The ability to solve problems is at the heart of mathematics.' (*Mathematics Counts, The Cockcroft Report*)

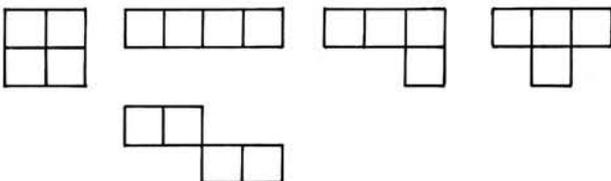
The problems invite application of spatial and numerical concepts and skills; they involve looking for pattern, making generalisations, and logical thinking.

THE LIGHTHOUSE KEEPER'S CATASTROPHE

1. Packing the lunch

Mrs Grinling 'prepared cold chicken sandwiches, a fruit salad with lots of strawberries and a chocolate milkshake for his lunch'. She put the fruit salad and the milkshake into square cartons and started to wrap everything up to put it in the basket . . .

Problem: Mrs Grinling can wrap up the food (represented by 4 multilink cubes) in five different ways (or if time, let the children discover how many ways).



She's going to make four packets the same shape (four sets of 4 cubes). Here is the 2D shape of the basket she is going to put them in (a 16-square grid in a simple 4 x 4 pattern – or use a more complex shape). The four packets can only go in one layer or they will poke out of the basket and the seagulls will get the food!

ONE MOONLIT NIGHT

1. Dressing in the dark: how many ways?

On another night when they were in the tent Tony took his red bobble hat, scarf and gloves; Sam took his green bobble hat, scarf and gloves. In the tent the clothes got mixed up. In the middle of the night the boys woke up, decided to go back into the house and got dressed.

Problem: How many different outfits could each one put on? Can you record all the combinations of hat, scarf and gloves?

Type of problem: Semi-open

Mathematical ideas: Logical thinking, looking for pattern

Nat Curric: AT1 Level 1-2

Range: Earlier

Resources: Real sets of clothes for experiment. Red and green crayons for recording. Paper cut-outs or duplicated sheets are alternatives.

(Adapted from *Number* magazine, RLDU, Avon CC)

Materials

How materials/equipment are made available needs to be carefully considered. For a genuinely 'open' investigation resources should be in a central general location – available for children to select from as they see fit. If the resources are set out as part of the activity the children are more likely to see it as a puzzle and try to find a use for whatever is provided, making it not their own investigation. In 'closed' problems the teacher chooses to narrow the focus by deliberately providing specific resources with which children will face the challenge of the problem.

Centrally located resources should include – as well as the materials suggested – scissors, glues, measuring devices, timers, junk materials, etc.

Choose one of the ways Mrs Grinling could wrap up the food. Will all four packets fit into the basket in one layer? If they do, can you colour the basket grid to show where each one will go? Choose another shape. Will this one fit? How many of the five shapes will fit into the basket four times in one layer?

Type of problem: Semi-open

Mathematical ideas: Spatial (involving prediction)

Nat Curric: AT9 Level 1-2, AT10 Level 1

Range: Earlier stage but can be complicated. Possibility of extending the idea with 3D shapes.

(Adapted from *Mathematical Investigation*, Somerset CC)

2. Crossing the gap

'Every morning Mr Grinling rowed out to the lighthouse to clean and polish the light.' On 'high days and holidays when the sun shone' Mrs Grinling, Mr Grinling and Hamish the cat all go to the lighthouse taking a huge basket of delicious lunch.

* Mr Grinling has broken his arm so Mrs Grinling has to row and there is only room for Mr Grinling or the basket or Hamish in the boat with her.

* Hamish will eat the lunch if he is left alone with it.

* Mr Grinling won't be left alone with Hamish – it was Hamish who tripped him up when he broke his arm.

Problem: How can they all get across? How many trips are needed?

Type of problem: Semi-open

Mathematical ideas: Spatial and logical thinking

Nat Curric: AT1 Level 3

Range: Later stage

Resources: Dolls, models, a toy boat, a real or paper sea; things to make concrete this problem in logic.

(Adapted from Brian Boulton, *Mathematical Activities*, Cambridge)



2. Making the tent

Children are invited to draw the tent in which the boys camped in the garden, on a VDU screen using a Logo chip or the program DART

OR They might make a skeleton of the tent using straws and plastic joints from the Orbit Kit

OR What about trying to design a different type of tent? Will it stand up?

Type of problem: Open

Mathematical ideas: Spatial involving length, distance and angle

Nat Curric: AT10 Level 4, AT11 Level 4

Range: Later

ICE CREAMS FOR ROSIE

1. Rosie Posie's ice cream cornets

'Rosie sold the only ice cream on the island. Creamy delectable, luscious lip-smacking ice cream . . . The islanders and visitors came in droves to eat Rosie Posie's ice cream. Rosie was delighted. She liked to see people munching and licking contentedly.'

Problem: Today Rosie Posie has three different flavours of ice cream to sell:

- Frangipani Frost (yellow)
- Mountain Mint (green)
- Whopple Doppie (purple)



Each cornet holds a double scoop.
How many different combinations of flavours can you make?

Suppose Rosie also has Praline Peach (orange), making four flavours. How many combinations can you make now?

Rosie sometimes has Texas Twirl (pink) and Choc-o-Chip (brown). Can you investigate how many different cornets you can make up with five, six or even more flavours?

Could you investigate triple top cones?

Type of problem: Semi-open, investigational

Mathematical ideas: Looking for pattern and generalisation

Nat Curric: AT1 Level 1-4

Range: Capable of adaptation for all stages

Resources: Younger children work with 2D cones and coloured scoops; older or more mathematically capable children can work in the abstract with coloured pens.

(Adapted from *Investigator* No. 11, SMILE Centre, London)

SCIENCE PROBLEMS

'The ability to communicate, to relate science to everyday life and to explore are essential elements of an initial experience of science.' (*Draft Statutory Orders for Science, NCC 1989*)

The problems involve processes of investigation, experimentation, fair testing, design-make, and include a variety of scientific ideas.

THE LIGHTHOUSE KEEPER'S CATASTROPHE

1. What was Mrs Grinling's brilliant idea?

2. Tidying up

Searching for another key Mr and Mrs Grinling 'opened old tins and jars, they emptied out drawers and they peered into cupboards but to no avail.'

Lots of things came out of the tins, jars, drawers and cupboards.

Problem: How many different ways can you find of sorting all these things? Can you find a way of recording what you decide without using words? Can you make anything useful – something for Hamish to play with, perhaps – from these things?

Type of problem: Open (though materials provided by teacher)

Science ideas and processes: Investigation, sorting and classifying. Communicating ideas. Design-make. Other ideas dependent on materials, perhaps mechanisms, energy transfer.

Nat Curric: Depends on resources selected

Range: A starting point for all ages

Resources: Collection of objects could include mechanical toys, household articles (egg whisk, bicycle bell, hand drill), cotton reels, elastic bands, etc.

For a variation on this problem, take as a starting point the 'glorious muddle' in Rosie Posie's shop in *Ice Creams for Rosie*.

3. Packing the lunch

Some days Mrs Grinling puts the chocolate milk shake in a tall beaker with a lid and the fruit salad into a jar with a screw top. She puts the sandwiches in polythene boxes. She chooses something in which to carry it all.

Problem: Which is the best thing to carry the lunch? A basket? A plastic carrier? A cardboard box?

Why is it the best? Easiest to carry? Strong enough? Holds most?

Which would be the best for keeping the seagulls out?

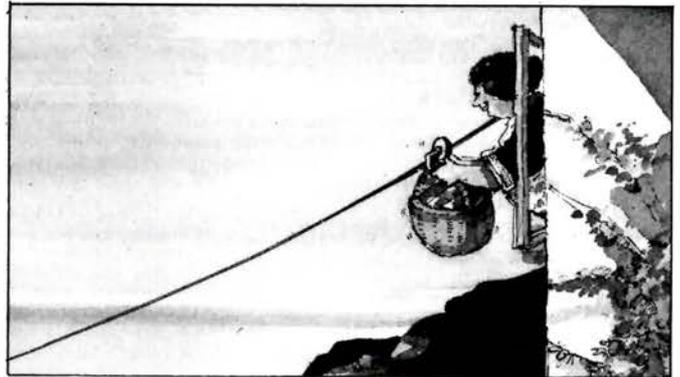
Type of problem: Semi-open

Science ideas and processes: Investigation, sorting, shape/spatial, nature of materials

Nat Curric: AT6 (Also mathematical)

Range: Earlier, but can easily be complicated for more advanced problem-solving, e.g. how could we send a cardboard box down the wire?

Resources: Different shaped containers; baskets, plastic carrier bag, cardboard box.



4. Across the gap

'At lunchtime Mrs Grinling packed the lunch in a basket and sent it down the wire to the lighthouse.'

Problem: Can you devise a system for getting Mr Grinling's lunch to the lighthouse? Sometimes in bad weather Mr Grinling gets stranded on the lighthouse for several days. How can he get the basket back to Mrs Grinling so she can send more food?

Type of problem: Open

Science ideas and processes: Design-make, structures and mechanisms

Nat Curric: AT6, AT13, AT10

Range: Later

Resources: Junk materials, construction kit, etc.

5. Turning on the light

'Think of all the ships that might be lost because your light isn't shining.'

Problem: Could you help Mr Grinling by fixing a switch on the mainland that would turn on the light in an emergency?

What materials would you need? Perhaps some of the things you have turned out of the drawers, tins and cupboards might help? Can you find a way to test your ideas? Can you make a switch to turn the light on and off?

Type of problem: Semi-open

Science ideas and processes: Investigate, experiment, electricity (conductivity)

Nat Curric: AT11, AT13, AT6

Range: Later

Resources: Bulb and battery (the lighthouse), assortment of wire, metal clips, wood, plastic, paper, etc. – available in a central resource for selection.

NOTE

Before giving children this problem it is essential that they have experienced a series of closed problems as challenges.

1. Can you make the bulb light? (Bulb and battery)
2. Can you make the bulb light using all these pieces? (Bulb, battery, two pieces of wire)
3. Can you connect the wires to the bulb holder and make the bulb light? (Bulb, battery, two pieces of wire, one bulb holder)
4. Which of this collection of things do you think electricity will travel through? Find a way to test them to see if you are right. (Add to the above metal clips, pins, toy cars, plastic, wood, card, etc.)

ONE MOONLIT NIGHT

1. Telling the difference

'It took most of the afternoon for Tony and Sam to move in (to the tent) . . . Mum brought a delicious camping tea. "Just in case you're starving after moving house all afternoon," she laughed.'

On the tray were burgers, crisps, apples and milk shakes (see picture). Tony and Sam like some brands of crisps more than others. Do you think they could *really* tell the difference? Could *you* tell the difference?

Problem: Can you design a fair test to see if your friend can really tell the difference?

Ask first which one your friend would choose – now try your test.

Type of problem: Semi-open

Science ideas and processes: Fair testing – identification of and dealing with range of possible variables

Nat Curric: AT3 Processes of Life, AT13 Energy

Range: Early – capable of complication

Resources: Two sorts of crisps.

2. Toys in the dark

The boys move into the tent. "I brought my gumboots," explained Tony, "just in case it rains." "I've brought something to drink," said Sam, "just in case we're thirsty, and I thought we might wake up early so I brought some toys."

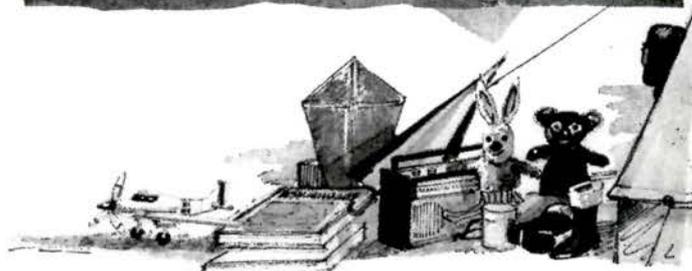
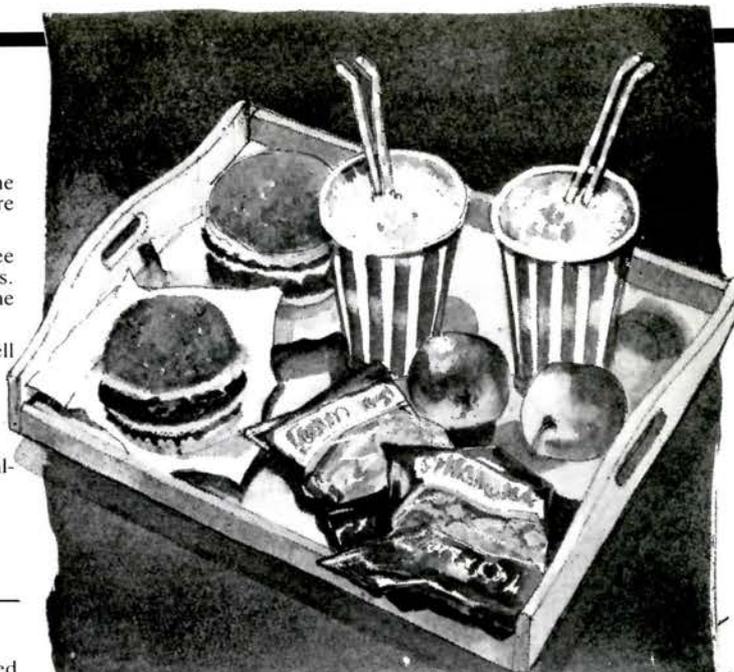
Problem: If the boys do wake up early and it is still dark, which toys will they be able to see?

Type of problem: Open

Science ideas and processes: Light, shape, colour, prediction. Investigation can lead to the designing of a test, exploring qualities of objects, identifying variables.

Nat Curric: AT6 Nature of Materials, AT15 Using Light

Range: Adaptable to any stage. Children may identify many variables. Accept those the children understand and allow them to explore. Too many variables can confuse the issue and make the activity 'teacher-directed' rather than 'teacher led'.



Resources: Centrally available for selection: large cardboard boxes (dark room?), pieces of fabric (to simulate tent), collection of toys (see picture).

ICE CREAMS FOR ROSIE

1. Ice cream drop

Rosie had a bright idea for getting the ice cream to the island. 'Early next morning at the airport on the mainland an aeroplane took on a rather precious cargo. When the aeroplane was over Kotuku island, the precious cargo was parachuted down.'

Problem: Can you design and make a parachute to carry the precious packages?

Type of problem: Semi-open

Science ideas and processes: Design-make, investigating strength of materials, weight in relation to capacity to catch air

Nat Curric: AT6 Materials, AT10 Forces, AT13 Energy

Range: Later

Resources: Packages to represent ice cream. Centrally available for selection – fabrics, papers, polythene, string, cotton, etc.

2. Saving the ice cream

'Poor Rosie Posie Hubble. Something had to be done or there would be nothing left of her idea but a river of melted ice cream.'

Problem: How quickly do ice creams melt? Is one kind of wrapping better than another to help stop the ice cream melting? Can you find out?

Type of problem: Semi-open

Science ideas and processes: Investigation leading to a test of design-make, nature of materials, insulation

Nat Curric: AT6, AT13 Energy

Range: Variable

Resources: Ice cubes (to represent ice cream!). Centrally available for selection: newspaper, tissue paper, waxed paper, brown paper, different sorts of card – dull, shiny, etc.

Ideas and problems for this feature contributed by

Christine Thomas, Advisory Teacher for Mathematics, Maths, Science and Technology Centre, Avon CC

Chris Ollershaw, Lecturer, Bristol Polytechnic; former Advisory Teacher for Science, Maths, Science and Technology Centre, Avon CC

Ronda and David Armitage's books are published in hardback by André Deutsch and in paperback as Picture Puffins

Grandma Goes Shopping, 0 233 97627 2, £5.95; 0 14 050.460 5, £1.95 pbk

Ice Creams for Rosie, 0 233 97361 3, £5.50

The Lighthouse Keeper's Catastrophe, 0 233 97891 7, £5.25; 0 14 050.663 2, £1.95 pbk

The Lighthouse Keeper's Lunch, 0 233 96868 7, £5.25; 0 14 050.327 7, £2.25 pbk

One Moonlit Night, 0 233 97540 3, £5.50; 0 14 050.461 3, £1.75 pbk

Apologies for the late arrival of the January issue of BfK

We had dozens of calls from readers at the beginning of February wondering what had happened to the January issue

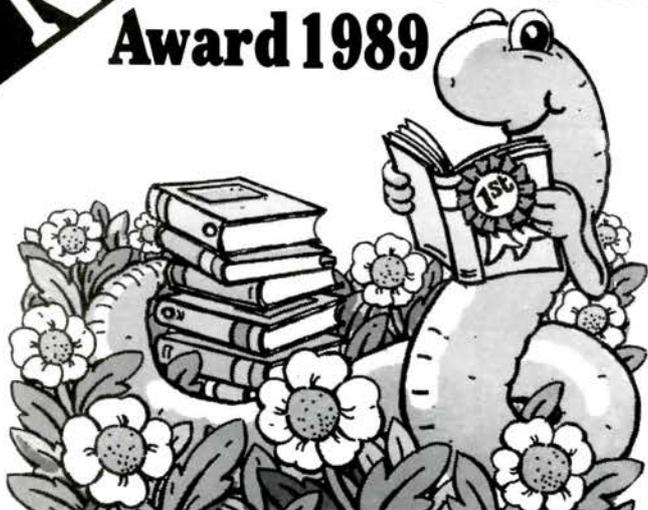
and whether their subscription was still in order. It was with this issue that we reorganised our mailing arrangements and placed it with a specialised mailing house. Everything went brilliantly, we sat back to congratulate ourselves on a

smart move (not a smart thing to do) when we learnt that this particular type of mailing (pre-sorted rebated postage) takes the Post Office up to ten working days to deliver!! Nobody thought to ask and nobody thought to tell us.

Obviously we're going to have to tweak the production schedule to take account of the PO and its wondrous ways. Under the new arrangements, we shall in future be sending out subscription renewal reminders separately.

BOOKS FOR KEEPS
NEWS

AWARDS

The Earthworm
Award 1989

Submissions for this interesting and important award (see last September's issue of **BfK**), set up and run by Friends of the Earth to encourage writing for children which reflect environmental concerns, are now being sought. The first prize has been increased to £1000 and entries should be in by 31st March 1989. The award will be presented in early June and we will be reporting on the winner in either the July or September issue of **BfK**. For further details contact:

Victoria Cliff Hodges
Friends of the Earth
26-28 Underwood Street
London
N1 7JQ
Tel: 01-253 3553

P.S. Friends of the Earth are currently preparing a booklist of the very best children's books which fulfil the criteria of the Earthworm Award itself. Watch this space for further details.

British Children's
Writer wins the Blue
Cobra

We were delighted to learn that Rhodri Jones has been awarded The Blue Cobra Award for 1988 by Kinderbuchfonds Dritte Welt (The Third World Children's Book Fund) for his novel **Delroy Is Here** in its German version. KDW is a Swiss based organisation and the award is made for the best German language children's book dealing with the Third World and/or Racism. The book is published in the UK by Dent (0 460 06138 0, £7.50).

Children's Book
of the Year

Set up and run by Lancashire County Library three years ago, and sponsored by NatWest, this award is one of the very few judged and decided by children themselves or, more accurately, by third-year pupils in secondary schools throughout Lancashire. As with the Earthworm Award, they've only just begun to consider submissions (in their case for a work of fiction published in the UK between September, 1987 and August 1989) and we won't know the results of their deliberations until later in the year. For further details contact:

Tracey Hollins
St Annes Library
254 Clifton Drive South
St Annes
Lancashire
FY4 1NR
Tel: 0253 729943

Best Books for Babies

Run by **Parents Magazine** and administered by Book Trust, this award for the best book for under-4s is gathering in entries for books published between 1st June 1988 and 30th April 1989. Entry forms available from Book Trust on 01-870 9055.



Science Museum, COPUS (Committee on the Public Understanding of Science)

Another award, in its second year, gearing up to find two books which in the opinion of the judges have made the best contribution to the public understanding of science; one for younger readers (under 16) and another for a more general readership. The shortlists will be announced in April, a month before the award ceremony to be held at the Science Museum on 16th May. For details contact:

Science Book Prizes
COPUS
6 Carlton House Terrace
London
SW1Y 5AG
Tel: 01-836 5561, Ext. 219

CONFERENCES AND EVENTS

National Tell a Story Week

29th April - 6th May 1989

The Federation of Children's Book Groups annually promotes a week of storytelling and activities linked to children's stories. Many different groups get involved all over the country - libraries, schools, playgroups, and anyone who is interested in encouraging children to enjoy storytelling. The theme this year will be Just a Giggle!



The national launch will be held in Aylesham Town Hall. For further information contact: Jan Sanderson, NTASW Publicity Officer, 31 The Green, Radcliffe-on-Trent, Nottingham NG12 2LA.

BOOKS FOR KEEPS NEWS

CONFERENCES AND EVENTS

Writing for Education

A day conference at the Robin Brook Centre, West Smithfield, London EC1, 15th April 1989, 10am to 5pm

A series of morning seminars and afternoon workshops aimed at enhancing the whole business of developing and writing teaching materials, not just for the classroom but, who knows, maybe for publishing proper too. The organisers tell us that at least eight books got published as a result of the last series. All enquiries to: Writing for Education Conference, 24 Broadgate, 727 Barking Road, London E13 9ES.

12th Annual Woodfield Lecture

17th May 1989, Loughborough University, 2.30 pm, admission free

This year's speaker is Brough Girling, Director of the Children's Book Foundation, and his theme will be **Children's Books: Medicine or Toys?** Further details from Margaret Kinnell, Dept of Library and Information Studies, Loughborough University, Loughborough LE11 3TU; Tel: 0509 223062.

Readathon '88

On Tuesday 28th February a staggering £700,000-plus, raised by Readathon '88, Britain's largest children's book promotion, was presented to the Chairman of the Malcolm Sargent Cancer Fund for Children. This campaign just keeps on growing - 25% up on Readathon '87's £400,000. Brough Girling, the campaign's director, is reported to be 'delighted' and is looking to break the magic one million pound mark some time in the next two years.

Children's Literature Summer School

23rd - 28th July 1989, Worcester College of Education Now in its thirteenth year, this popular course, mainly but not exclusively for teachers and librarians, strives to extend knowledge of recent fiction for children with discussions, visiting speakers, workshop sessions and daily visits to places of interest. For further details contact: The Director, Summer School Office, Worcester College of Higher Education, Henwick Grove, Worcester WR2 6AJ; Tel: 0905 748080.

IMPRINTS

Firefly

A new list of non-fiction titles, called Firefly, aimed at 3 to 8s from the Sussex-based publishers Wayland. The first batch is due at the end of March and will attempt to bridge the gap between picture books and junior information books. Titles include **A Journey by Car/Train/Boat/Plane and My House/School/Street**.

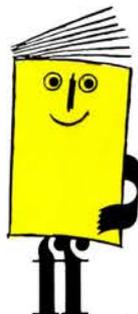
Collins to launch new Non-Fiction series in June

Maybe a bit premature this but worth keeping an eye out for nonetheless. We're promised a range of publishing that stretches from pre-school through to teens. We've seen bits of an attractive looking Picture Dictionary at one end and a series called 'Viewpoints' at the other (looking at psychology and TV journalism amongst other things). Good to see a non-specialist, non-fiction publisher having a go at a notoriously difficult genre of publishing.

Faber Children's Paperbacks

Faber launch themselves into the paperback listings proper on 20th March with **Faber**

Children's Paperbacks. Having watched other famous hardback houses take this precarious but seemingly inevitable step in today's harsh and possibly declining hardback market, we wish Faber well. Of course they have some experience of paperbacking as those who remember their Fanfair imprint will recall. Others have burnt their fingers by not getting cover prices right nor understanding the necessity and practice of the vital promotional and selling-in push so critical in a hugely competitive paperback market. However the signs are looking good in Faber's case.



Cover prices are in line, at £1.99, with other paperbacks, and the publicity and sales departments have been leaping up and down for months now with all the sales aids required for the launch of a new paperback imprint. The mix of the first eight titles, for 8 to 12 year olds, includes the reissue of Nicholas Stuart Gray's **Grimbold's Other World** and Ruth Tomalin's **Gone Away** - out of print for too long - plus

The World is a Banana by Robert McCrum, not seen in paperback before. A further six titles for 5 to 8 year olds (due on 24th April) will include **The Iron Man** (Ted Hughes) and another two titles which have lingered in the limbo of o/p, **Melanie Brown Goes to School** by Pamela Oldfield and Alison Uttley's **Lavender Shoes**. Faber tell us they'll be happy to send more details. Contact: The Promotions Department, Faber & Faber, 3 Queen Square, London WC1N 3AU; Tel: 01-278 6881.

Simon & Schuster buy Macdonald Children's List

More publishing musical chairs (hot on the heels of the mega battle for Collins by Rupert Murdoch), this time by the powerful American publishing conglomerate, Simon & Schuster who, rumour has it, has been looking for a chance to break into the UK children's book market for some time. Macdonald, Purnell and Beehive (all previously owned by Maxwell Communication Corporation) are reported to have cost S&S almost £8 million.

Anyone out to buy BfK will have fork out ten million, billion. Cash. And put the cat out at night.

If you would like BfK to carry information about forthcoming events and news on this page, please

MISCELLANY

The Top 100 Most Borrowed Children's Books

Interested? Then collect a copy of The Public Lending Right Registry's list of said Top 100 for 1988 from the Arts and Library Press Office, Government Buildings, Horse Guards Road, London SW1 or telephone Sheila Armitage at the PLR Office on 0642 604699.

Great British Book Fairs

Launched in February by Scholastic Publications, **Great British Book Fairs** is a school-based bookselling venture, said to have been imported from the US two years ago by School Book Fairs Ltd, the Dorset company. The 'idea' is a week-long book display in a school of about 300 children's paperbacks in mobile display cases. A commission goes to the school hosting the event. As for the newness of the 'concept' - we've known of committed British children's booksellers doing something remarkably similar for years. For further information, phone: Chris Day, 092681 3910.

contact us (see address and telephone number on page 3) and we'll do our best to include it. ■