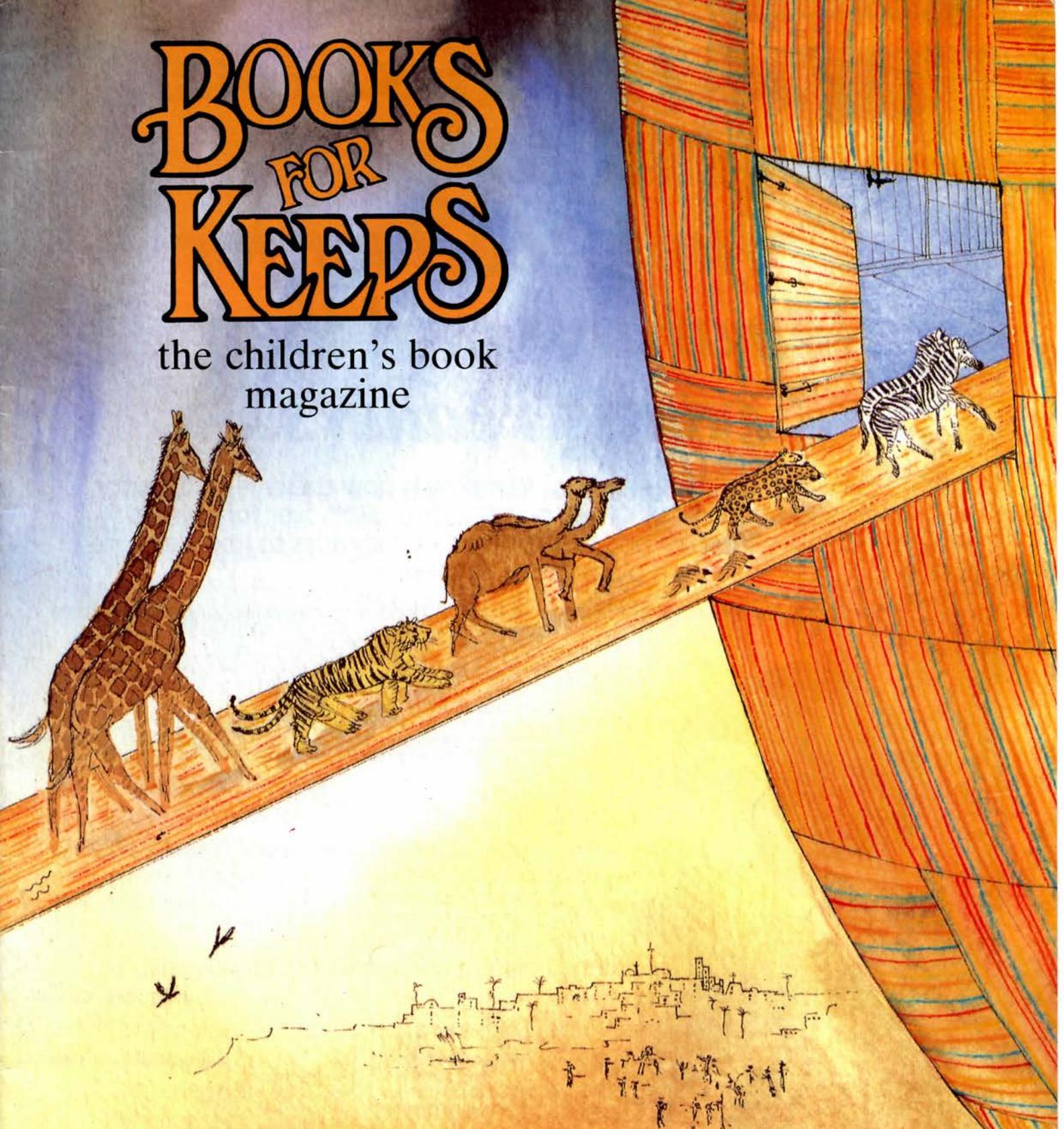


BOOKS FOR KEEPS

the children's book
magazine



MAY 1989 No. 56 UK Price £1.40

PICTURE BOOKS

Maurice Sendak

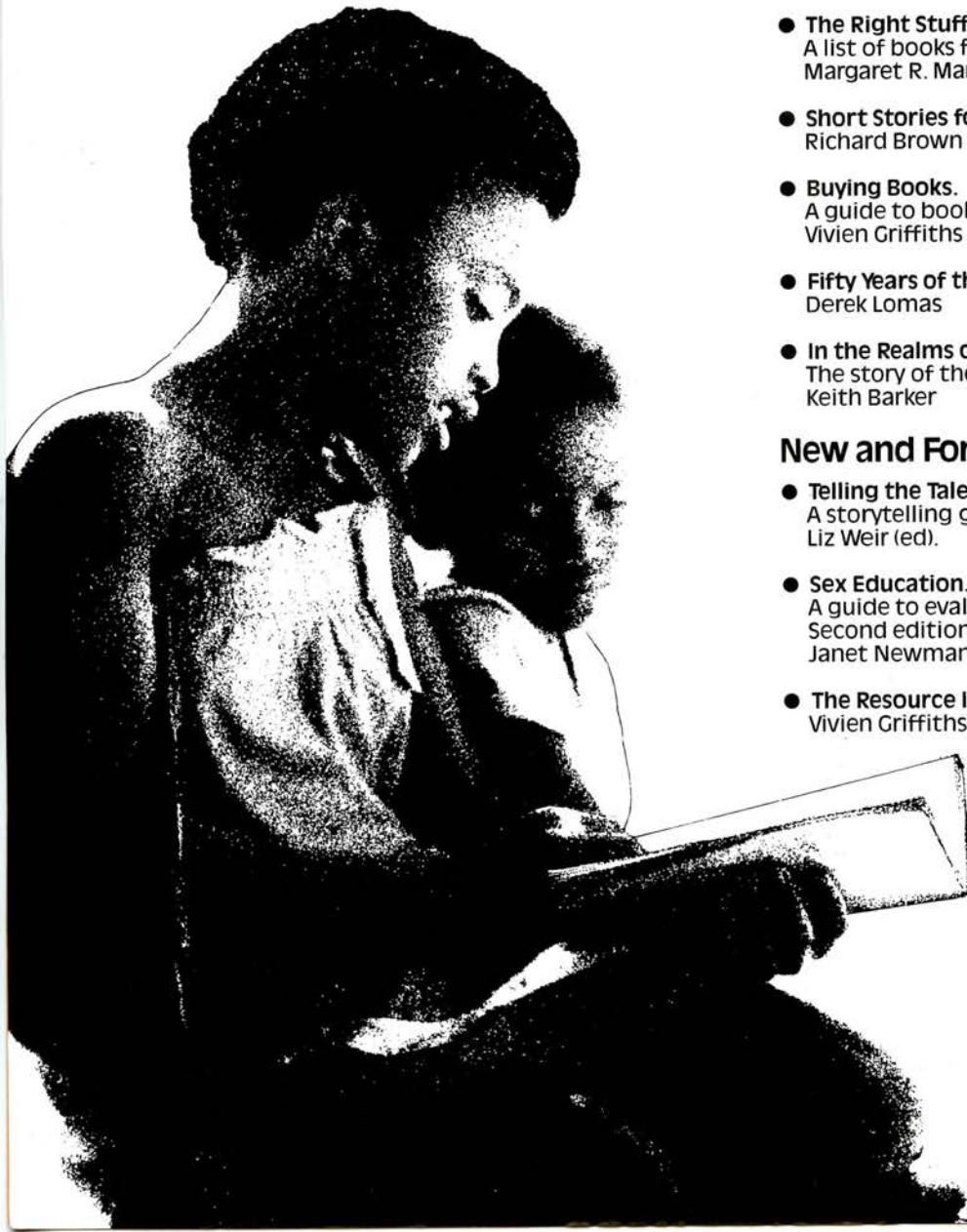
Fiona French

Youth Libraries Group and Remploy working together for librarians and their young readers

We are pleased to announce that Remploy is now the sole distributor for the Youth Libraries Group publications. With over forty years experience of caring for books behind us, our services to librarians are already well known.

Titles ready for distribution include

- **Multiracial Books for the Classroom.** 0 946581 02 09 £5.00
Fourth edition.
Judith Elkin and Vivien Griffiths.
- **The Right Stuff.** 0 946581 06 1 £3.50
A list of books for teenagers.
Margaret R. Marshall
- **Short Stories for Children.** 0 946581 07 X £3.00
Richard Brown and Glenys Willars
- **Buying Books.** 0 946581 01 0 £2.80
A guide to book selection.
Vivien Griffiths (ed.)
- **Fifty Years of the Carnegie Medal.** 0 946581 05 3 £1.50
Derek Lomas
- **In the Realms of Gold.** 0 86203 260 1 £4.95
The story of the Carnegie Medal.
Keith Barker



New and Forthcoming Publications

- **Telling the Tale.** 0 946581 08 8 £5.00
A storytelling guide.
Liz Weir (ed.)
- **Sex Education.** Due early summer 1989
A guide to evaluation of materials.
Second edition.
Janet Newman and Anthony Tilke
- **The Resource Implications of GCSE.** Due late summer 1989
Vivien Griffiths (ed.)



Remploy Limited
London Road, Newcastle-under-Lyme,
Staffordshire ST5 1RX
Telephone 0782 711811
Fax 0782 717912

Contents

Editor's Page	3
News and comment from the Editor	
Frightened into Being an Artist	4
Maurice Sendak talking informally	
Reviews	8
Paperbacks	
Audio Tapes	
Authorgraph No. 56	16
Fiona French	
Lifeline 4: Projects and Topics	19
Pat Thomson continues her series with the theme of Celebrations and Festivals	
News	23
Awards	24
Stephanie Nettell on this year's Guardian Award, plus a round-up	
Rise, Shine . . .	27
Chris Powling makes his selection from the Spring picture-books	
The Mother Goose Award 1989	32
Anne Marley reports	

Cover Story

The illustration on our cover is taken from *Rise, Shine!* by Fiona French, published in April by Methuen (0 416 08122 3, £5.95). We are grateful to Methuen for help in using this illustration.

BOOKS for KEEPS

— the magazine of the School Bookshop Association

MAY 1989 No. 56

ISSN. 0143-909X

Editor: Richard Hill

Designed and typeset by: Rondale Limited, Lydney, Glos.

Printed by: Surrey Fine Art Press Ltd, Redhill, Surrey

© School Bookshop Association 1989

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)

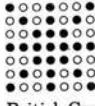
Single copies:

£1.40 (UK); £2.00 (overseas surface mail)

Airmail rates available on application.

Or use the Dial-a-Sub service on 01-852 4953.

Editorial correspondence: Books for Keeps, 1 Effingham Road, Lee, London SE12 8NZ. Tel: 01-852 4953.



The British Council



**Lloyds
Bank**

Books for Keeps

— 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



Last year **BfK** was offered the chance of interviewing Maurice Sendak who was on an all too brief visit to this country. Regrettably his publishers were only able to offer us one hour, and not a minute more, with this singular artist. It seemed the whole world wanted an hour too. Even though we had one of the UK's most distinguished children's book journalists ready to go, we felt that sixty minutes were simply inadequate to do Mr Sendak justice. It has not been uncommon for Authorgraph interviews to stretch over half a day, even longer sometimes. It's the talk leading to relaxed conversation that provides some of the best nuggets which, to use a word Sendak himself employs, 'quicken' or bring to life the human being in the finished, published article. With great reluctance we turned down the hour and thereby gave up the opportunity of talking to a book creator whom many consider to be one of the greatest, living exponents of the modern picture-book. His *Where the Wild Things Are* alone is enough to guarantee him a place in the history of illustration.

But the next best thing has floated out of the blue in the form of *Caldecott & Co. — Notes on Books and Pictures*, a collection of essays and reviews written by Maurice Sendak over the last 35 years and published in the UK by Reinhardt Books. At the risk of putting all critical faculties to one side for the moment, it has to be said that *Caldecott & Co.* is simply wonderful. And rare too. Wonderful because it's a delightful, enlightening journey into the history and development of the picture-book. And rare because percolating through its pages is a wisdom, born of a great knowledge and an intriguing being, which makes connections that enrich and excite. Not least on the nature and state of childhood itself. What better way to launch our annual picture-book issue than the extract we have printed on pages 4-6? As for that lost interview, it doesn't seem to matter so much now. More to the point, how does one go about persuading Mr Sendak to become a regular contributor to these pages so that we might look forward to *Caldecott & Co.*, Vol 2?

The subject of our authorgraph, Fiona French, has something of the same, 'ambiguous, idiosyncratic' (two more Sendak words used to describe what we should look for in good picture books) magic about her. Her striking *Snow White in New York* which won the Kate Greenaway award in 1986 was one of the most stylish re-workings of a popular fairytale seen in recent years — the poisoned apple in *The Big Apple* with Snow White presented as a flapper and the dwarfs as seven jazz-men. Turn to the centre-spread for the full story . . . and pages 27-30 for Chris Powling's pick of the Spring picture-books. Also in this issue is the last but one of Pat Thomson's superb 'Lifeline 4' series — on 'Celebrations and Festivals' this time — plus a round-up of current audio tapes (which, to remind you, we're running every other issue) from Rachel Redford and an update on the winners of two of the most important awards of the year, the *Guardian* and *Mother Goose*.

Story Aid 1990

An intriguing news item came in from the Federation of Children's Book Groups (FCBG) just days before we went to press about a project they are calling *Story Aid 1990* (see page 24). We've only seen an initial briefing paper and managed one telephone conversation with the FCBG so it's very difficult at this stage to know how BIG they are thinking but the more I ponder (and I have to admit the idea's got me well and truly hooked) the BIGGER the possibilities appear. There's massive, much of it latent, goodwill right across the children's book world and I don't just mean the British bit of it either. All of us, in whatever capacity, work in this field because we know how critically important the Book is to all the freedoms (political, social, and economic) we enjoy. How can the poor and oppressed of the world ever free themselves and stay free unless,

as the Federation so rightly puts it, they are enabled to 'feed the mind as well as feed the body'. Okay, so many agencies are already addressing themselves to the exigencies of worldwide cultural impoverishment but it would be the first time that the dispersed and decentralised community of children's books did its, I suspect, not inconsiderable bit. I can't think of a better agency than the FCBG to pull off something like this providing it gets the rest of us involved and creates the essential momentum. It would be a pity for such a superb idea to be inhibited through lack of ambition and imagination. For starters on the one-off ideas front, how about a small but heavily sponsored team from the children's book world entering the London Marathon next year?

For want of a Letters Page

BfK has, surprisingly, never carried a proper, regular Letters to the Ed. page. Never let it be said though that when we do get a good one, even if it is of a critical nature, we would not hesitate to publish it. Especially when the correspondent is Bernard Ashley. Remember the article 'Integrating the Core Curriculum' in our last issue? It described how picture-books can be used to promote problem-solving. Here's how Bernard took exception:

'Dear **BfK**,

Hold it right there! Before you go any further into gutting more fiction for its Mathematical and Scientific core curriculum attainment targets, please reflect on the fact that some of us actively refuse to allow course books to examine or assess children through our texts, considering fiction written for pleasure to be available principally for entertainment. There are bonuses to fiction, of course, and you know that I can speak at length about them: but such secondary use should always be firmly in the hands of the reader.

*They're big on "unit studies" in Strathclyde — where a reception class I saw was so busy mining the cross-curricular ore from *The Lighthouse Keeper's Lunch* that it took the best part of half a term for the children to get to the end of the story. I wonder if they cared by then?*

*But well done or poorly, please don't spread this approach to books through *Books for Keeps* of all places — the magazine born to support those who first treated good books properly by encouraging private ownership. Ownership has two meanings: the physical and the spiritual, and this second is as important as the first. What a child does as the result of reading or sharing a book should be his or her concern (within the law). School mathematics and science can be exciting enough, and there are many cross-curricular ways into both areas without doing our books to death. If you suggest in your pages such activities with any of mine, I'll sue for misuse.*

Love Bernard.'

Fair enough. And yet I thought that Pat (Triggs) who penned the intro. to the piece spelt out as clearly as possible the enhancing potential such an integrative approach can have, especially on behalf of the 'essential literary encounter' with the story itself. As one of the few non-teachers on the **BfK** editorial team, it seems perfectly obvious to me. Both Pat and Bernard are right but what they each omit to say, because it's so much second nature to them, is that in the end it matters less about the particular approach and much more about the quality of the teaching.

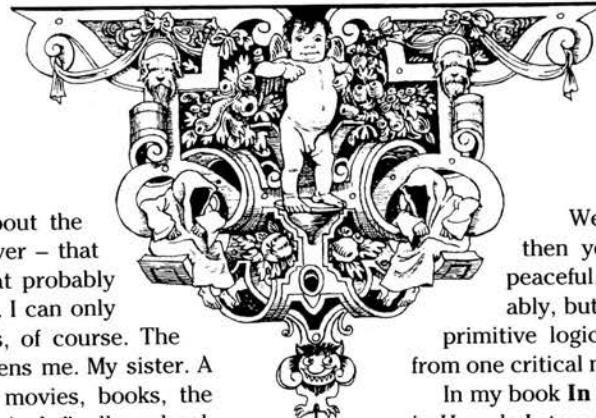
Now down to that other letter I must write:

Dear Mr Sendak,

If ever you're in London again, I wonder . . .

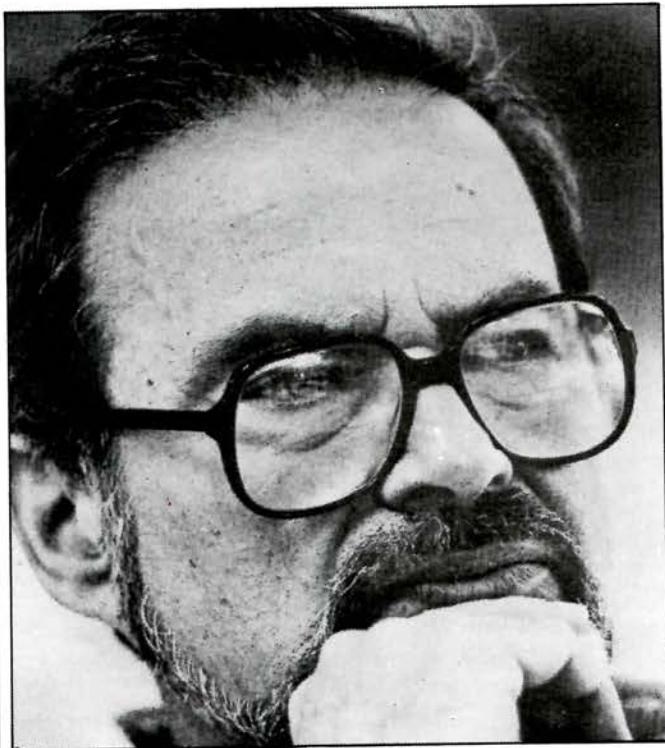
Frightened into Being an Artist

Maurice Sendak
talking informally



I have been thinking lately about the monsters – or fantasies or whatever – that frightened me as a child, and that probably frightened me into being an artist. I can only come up with a few. My parents, of course. The vacuum cleaner, which still frightens me. My sister. A very few ordinary horrors from movies, books, the radio. The Lindbergh kidnapping. And, finally, school, for which I had a desperate loathing.

Aside from my parents – those occasional, and unwitting, monsters – the things that frightened me were mostly unpredictable, which goes to show that those people (myself included) who are determined to know what it is that scares children don't know at all. I think even a child psychologist would agree with that.



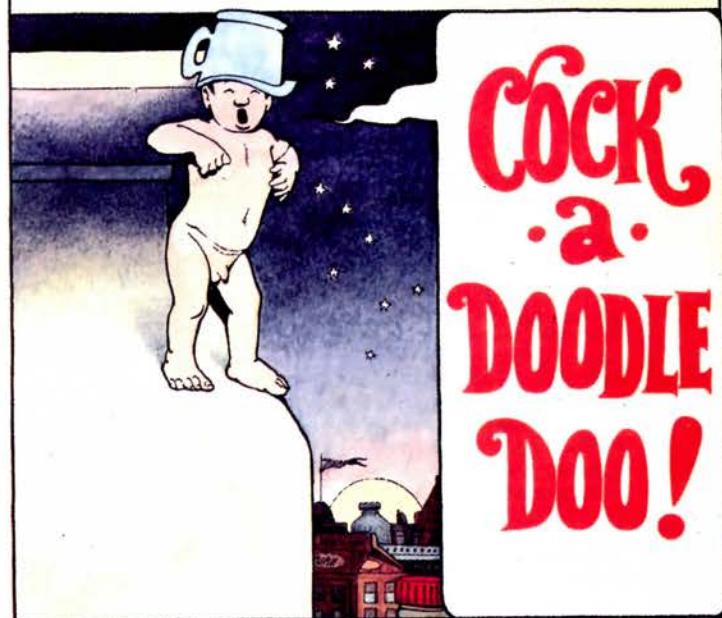
Photograph of Maurice Sendak by Chris Callis, 1988

What interests me is what children do at a particular moment in their lives when there are no rules, no laws, when emotionally they don't know what is expected of them. In **Where the Wild Things Are**, Max gets mad. What do you do with getting mad?

Well, you're mean to your mother, and then you regret it, and then all becomes peaceful. It will happen again tomorrow, probably, but the problem for children, with their primitive logic and lack of experience, is passing from one critical moment to the next.

In my book **In the Night Kitchen**, Mickey's problem is: How do I stay up all night and see what grownups do, and have the fun that is denied me as a child? The fact that there was such an explosion when the book came out, that it could only appear in some libraries after someone painted diapers on the naked Mickey, seems to me grim testimony to our puritanical attitudes. Apparently, a little boy without his pajamas on was more terrifying to some people than any monster I ever invented.

Now MICKEY IN THE NIGHT KITCHEN CRIED



From *In the Night Kitchen*.

Outside Over There is the most personal of my books, and my favorite. Much of it is based on what scared me when I was little. I remember as a very small child seeing a book about a little girl who is caught in a rainstorm. She's wearing a huge yellow slicker and boots, and the rain comes down harder and harder, and

begins to rise and spill into her boots, and that's when I would always stop looking at the book. It scared me too much. I never found out what happened to the little girl.

So **Outside Over There** is partly about that fear. It's also about Mozart, because I love Mozart and also because I was working on my first opera designs – for **The Magic Flute** – when I conceived this book. I set it in Mozart's time, in the last decade of the eighteenth century, the decade he died. So I was thinking of **The Magic Flute**, thinking of a little girl in a raincoat and boots, thinking of the end of the eighteenth century. And I was also thinking of my sister, Natalie, who is nine years older than I am and who had to care for me. Today she's a very nice lady who lives in New Jersey and has no memory at all of the outrageous behavior that occurred between us. But I, alas, remember everything. It's one of the curses of my profession. I remember her demonic rages. I remember her losing me at the New York World's Fair of 1939. I also remember that she loved me very much. But my parents were both working hard and didn't have enough time, and so I was dumped on her. And that is the situation in **Outside Over There**: a baby is taken care of by an older child named Ida, who both loves and hates the newcomer.

There was a peculiar kind of baby boom in the early thirties. You had the Dionne quintuplets, you had Eddie Cantor dressing like a baby, and Baby Snooks, and, most important, you had the Lindbergh case. That is a memory all middle-aged Americans share, one of the most traumatic experiences of our lives. I remember it. I remember the headlines in the newspaper. I remember the anxiety. Lindbergh was the Prince Charles of his day, and his wife the Princess Di, and their baby a royal prince, a beautiful, blond, charming baby. At that time I was a very sickly child, and very worried about it, mainly because my parents were indiscreet enough to bewail my sickness and carry on about how long I'd be around.

I learned early on that it was a very chancy business, being alive. Then this disaster occurred: an immaculate, rich baby, living on an estate, surrounded by warriors, you would think – German shepherds, guards, all the rest – on an ordinary evening, on an ordinary March day, this precious baby is taken away. I lived in

terror and dread of what might happen to him. I remember Gabriel Heatter, the famous news commentator, reading the baby's formula over the radio, because the baby had a cold and Mrs Lindbergh was worried about his being cared for.

Well, there I am, four years old, sick in bed and somehow confusing myself with this baby. I had the superstitious feeling that if he came back I'd be okay, too. Sadly, we all know the baby didn't come back. It left a peculiar mark on the mind.

All children – whether or not they grew up with the Lindbergh case – worry. Will Mama and Papa go away and never come back? Will I die? We don't like to think of kids worrying about such things, but of course they do. They have no choice, if they're intelligent and sensitive and alive to what's happening in the world.

In fairy tale and fantasy we reconstruct and defuse dreadful moments of childhood. **Outside Over There** became my exorcism of the Lindbergh case. In it, I am the Lindbergh baby and my sister saves me. It's Charlie Lindbergh brought back to life. And there is a reconciliation between Ida and her mother.

Ida's mother is not a monster. She is not indifferent to her children. She happens to miss her husband, and for one brief moment she leaves the baby. Even loving mamas turn away sometimes. You have to vacuum the floor, answer the telephone, go to your job, and just then kids are caught in a crisis – a very quiet crisis. You don't hear a scream, you don't hear a fall, but something occurs; and in the case of Ida, she has to make a quick decision. She is resentful about being stuck with the baby and flies into a rage, has a fantasy – a Lindbergh fantasy. But, finally, Ida restores everything to its natural order because, being a healthy child, she has to, she wants to. She loves the baby. She hates it only occasionally. In the end, the book is really a tribute to my sister, who is Ida, very brave, very strong, very frightening, taking care of me. Baby.

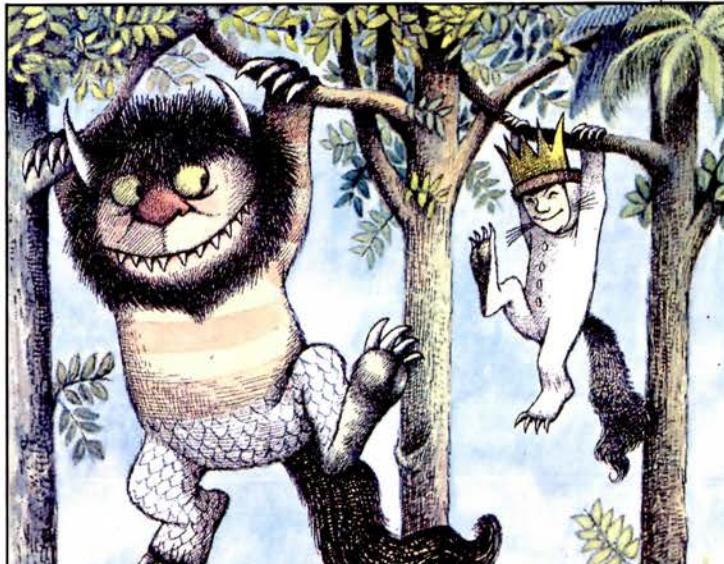
I do care about children a lot. And when I say I don't write for them, it doesn't mean I don't care for them. I project into all my favorite music and pictures an intense nostalgia for childhood, a passionate affiliation with childhood. It's the same with literature – from Melville to James, I always seem to find a sub-text that involves children. Those are the reverberations that get to me and enter into my work.

I think some of the most touching moments in **The Magic Flute** have to do with children. Much of the opera focuses on the confusion of an adolescent girl. Is her mother crazy? Is the man she loves crazy? Has the solemn Sarastro saved her or kidnapped her? Isn't this very much what life is like for many young people? Very arbitrary, no rhyme, no reason, no logic. And then, when Pamina is about to commit suicide, she is



From **Outside Over There**.

From **Where the Wild Things Are**.



stopped by the three genies – as Mozart notes in the score, *drei Knaben*, three little boys. When she has lost all trust in all the adults in the opera, these three kids say: 'Don't do it, life is all right. He does love you. Come with us and we'll show you.' And they all break into an incredible, happy quartet. The fact that Mozart would give these boys the simple truth to deliver reinforces my convictions about children and their relationship to adults and the world.

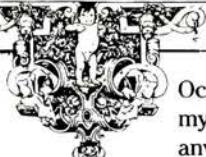
Children are entirely at the mercy of adults – their parents, their siblings, and their teachers. I suppose there are the same kinds of dreadful people around in schools today as there were when I was a child. I had the bad luck to have several indifferent and unfeeling teachers. But then I was a very difficult child. I hated school. Even when I was encouraged to do what they thought I wanted to do – write and paint pictures – I had no pleasure, because I was doing it in a schoolroom. So there was nothing that could be done for me. My poor parents had to make countless trips to the school principal's office, and there were great mullings and puzzlings over how an apparently intelligent child could be so stupid all the time and so indifferent to what he ought to be learning.

The problem, so far as I was concerned, was to live until I was seventeen, so I could get out of school. It was just a matter of counting the years until then, when by law you could be free. The idea of college was anathema to me. The suggestion that you might choose to go on – total madness. So I didn't.

Our vacuum cleaner was surely the most eccentric of my childhood terrors. My mother would innocently bring it out – an old Hoover, the kind you plugged into the wall to make the bag swell up. So did I, apparently. They tell me I would start screaming uncontrollably at the sight of the vacuum, so I was allowed to go to the neighbors' apartment across the hall until the ordeal was over. I wonder why my mother never bought a quiet, compact model. Maybe it was too effective a weapon.

I used this fear when **Where the Wild Things Are** was turned into an opera some years ago. It's a book of only 385 words and it had to become an opera at least three-quarters of an hour long. So I amplified the opening scenes when Max gets mad at his mother. And to give this episode dramatic point, I had the mother enter with her vacuum cleaner, which drives Max bananas and which he then attacks with his sword. So this vacuum-cleaner phobia is now, to my astonishment, a significant moment in an opera.

At an early age I was taken to the movies every Friday night. If I'd been a Renaissance child and had lived in Rome, I could have gone down the block and seen Michelangelo working on the Sistine Chapel, and I would have been a much more enlightened and tasteful human being. But since I was a Brooklyn kid, there was only the Kingsway Theater, and you made shift.



Occasionally, this looked-for pleasure scared me out of my wits. The offending movie, paradoxically, might be anything from Chaplin to Disney, and on one unforgettable evening we went to see **The Invisible Man**. Whenever it's on late-night television, I still try to watch it, without much success, because when Claude Rains unbandages his head and there's nothing there, it's Valium time for me.

These days I go to the movies once in a while. I was curious to see **Rambo** and took a young friend. Not only was I frightened, I was upset. I was surrounded by hysterically laughing children. I thought they were all crazy. But I finally realized that I was on a different wavelength completely, and what was very frightening to me didn't seem to frighten them at all. I've never heard so many chuckles and yucks every time somebody got blown up.

Maybe those old movies that scared me touched fears much closer to home. Children are always asking me where I got the idea for the **Wild Things**. I don't really know where they came from, but you have to tell children something. When I began drawing the pictures, I went the conventional route of griffins and other creatures from medieval iconography, which was very unsatisfying. Suddenly these characters began to appear and they were, surprisingly, people I knew.

I think it was the recollection of dreadful Sundays in Brooklyn when my sister, my brother, and I had to get dressed up for our aunts and uncles, none of whom I cared for particularly. I was an ungracious and ungenerous child, because what I really resented was that they were coming to eat our food. I never agreed for an instant that they should eat our food, or that we should share it. And I hated the fact that my mother was a very slow cooker, which meant that we had to spend what seemed like hours in the living room with people we detested.

We were, in other words, children. And the only relief from sitting and listening to the noxious 'how big you've gotten' stuff was to examine those relatives critically and make note of every mole, every bloodshot eye, every hair curling out of every nostril, every blackened tooth. I lived in apprehension that, if my mother cooked too slowly and they were getting very hungry, they would lean over, pinch my cheek, and say, 'You look so good, we could eat you up.' And in fact we had no doubt they would. They ate anything in sight. And so, in the end, it seems that the **Wild Things** are those same aunts and uncles. May they rest in peace.

Despite the fact that I don't write with children in mind, I long ago discovered that they make the best audience. They certainly make the best critics. They are more candid and to the point than professional critics. Of course, almost anybody is. But when children love your book, it's 'I love your book, thank you, I want to marry you when I grow up.' Or it's 'Dear Mr Sendak: I hate your book. Hope you die soon. Cordially.' ■



This edited extract is reprinted from **Caldecott and Co.**, a collection of 'notes on books and pictures' written by Maurice Sendak over the last 25 years. In the book this piece from **The New York Times Book Review** (1987) is entitled 'An Informal Talk'; it was originally given in Philadelphia in 1985 under the sponsorship of the Rosenbach Museum and Library.

Caldecott and Co., Maurice Sendak, Reinhardt Books in association with Viking, 1 871 06106 7, £13.95

Maurice Sendak's books mentioned in the text are available in hardback from The Bodley Head and in paperback from Picture Puffins:

Where the Wild Things Are, 0 370 00772 7, £8.95;
0 14 050 031 6, £2.95 pbk

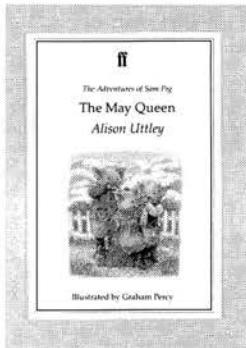
In the Night Kitchen, 0 370 01549 5, £6.95; 0 14 050 075 8,
£1.95 pbk

Outside Over There, 0 370 30403 9, £5.95; 0 14 050 487 7,
£3.50 pbk

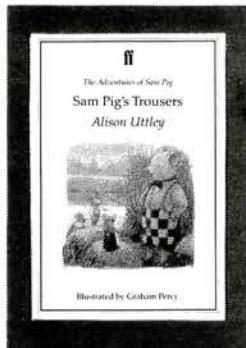
THE ADVENTURES OF SAM PIG

Alison Uttley

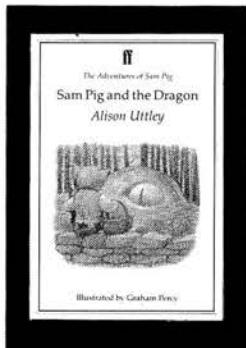
Illustrated by Graham Percy



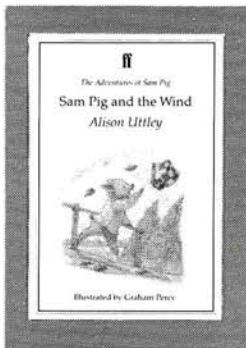
The May Queen



Sam Pig's Trousers



Sam Pig and the Dragon



Sam Pig and the Wind

'Still as fresh now as they must have been when they first saw the light of day. Terrific books with smashing new illustrations.' *Books for Students*

'The latest representations of this delectable Uttley world should satisfy Sam's old friends just as well as they satisfy the new readers lining up to meet an animal now very nearly an astonishing fifty years old.' *Growing Point*

The doors to the enchanting world of Sam Pig and his friends open once again with the publication of the second four titles in the wonderful Sam Pig series.

The welcome reissue of Alison Uttley's classic tales will ensure that the irresistibly appealing Sam Pig becomes a firm favourite with today's young readers.

£2.99 each Laminated Boards

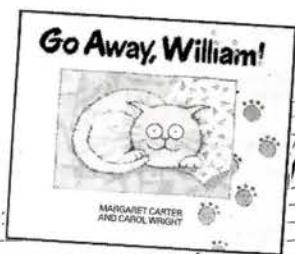
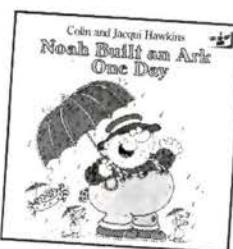
ff
faber and faber

P.P.P. PICK UP A PICTURE BOOK . . .

Noah Built an Ark One Day

A colourful, funny lift-the-flap book, telling the story of Noah and his Ark as never told before! Written and illustrated by Colin and Jacqui Hawkins. Shortlisted for Best Books for Babies Award

0 416 09412 0 £5.95



Nijinsky

The early life of the great dancer Nijinsky is retold with captivating colour illustrations, in this the year of the centenary of his birth.

0 416 08402 8 £6.95

The Oak

A beautifully illustrated book by Naomi Russell, depicting the life of a tree from acorn to oak. Open out the pages and discover the hidden secrets of woodland life.

0 416 10732 X £4.95

Rise, Shine!

The story of Noah and his Ark based on the Negro spiritual. Vivid illustrations by Kate Greenaway Award winner, Fiona French.

0 416 08122 3 £5.95



METHUEN CHILDREN'S BOOKS

REVIEWS

Nursery/Infant



This rabbit can wash her face ...



and so can I!

And So Can I!

Bill Gillham, Magnet, 0 416 13142 5, £2.50

Another excellent book in this series (also available *The First Words Picture Book* and *The Early Words Picture Book*) where real full-colour photographs are used throughout. In this one each page starts with an animal who can ... paddle, jump, peep over a fence, walk along a wall, and so on. Every double page shows child and animal doing his, her or its version of the same thing until the last double page which shows a child reading. Only this the animals can not do too.

Useful for encouraging language with young children. New readers should gain confidence from the simple text which relates very clearly to the pictures. A nice one to have around at school or at home.

MS

Have You Seen My Cat?

Eric Carle, Picture Knight, 0 340 49106 X, £2.50

Eric Carle has a happy knack of building curiosity and anticipation into his books so that every stylish, patterned page is looked forward to and enjoyed. This one is no exception: we are immediately caught in a simple yet compelling problem ... a boy has lost his cat and needs to find it again.

Any old cat will not do ... the boy finds a lion, a panther, a tiger, a cheetah, a bobcat, a puma, a Persian cat and a jaguar before he eventually

finds his very own cat, with her kittens.

The watching listening child will enjoy looking carefully at each picture and the adult, enjoying the story, will find much to discuss as they go along. Yes, it's useful for categorising and vocabulary and all that stuff, but it's also terrific fun, whatever your age.

MS

The Enormous Chocolate Pudding

Scoular Anderson, Picture Knight, 0 340 49107 8, £2.50

A grumpy king and his household cope with the problem of a large chocolate pudding spoiling their view of the landscape. No one can think of a way of removing it until the court jester reaches the logical conclusion ... and manages to get the king to think it was his idea. A fine picnic is organised and the chocolate pudding gets eaten up.

I have to admit to not being overwhelmingly attracted to this book on the first reading but it improved second time round. There's a lot of detail in the pictures and plenty to laugh about too, especially in the picnic picture. Probably for the 5+ age group and older for reading themselves.

MS

Puzzled and perplexed he sets off to find it again. On the way he meets a bear, a snake, a crocodile, a monkey, an elephant and a flamingo, and he looks carefully at each of them. Finally he comes upon a spider and gets such a fright he roars loudly.

An ideal picture book for young children, with its decorative, pastel coloured illustrations, its gentle yet interesting adventure and satisfactory conclusion. Words like steep, deep, long, tall, wet and shallow are used in context and the listening child becomes aware of their meanings through the pictures and the sense of the story.

I Can Blink

0 552 52538 3

I Can Roar

0 552 52539 1

Frank Asch, Picture Corgi, £2.50 each

Children whose homes do not contain many books may need to learn that books are fun; these will help with that (although the books will need careful treatment if they are to survive for any length of time). Each picture has an animal or bird on it with a hole where the face should be. The child puts his face in the space and responds to invitations to 'roar like a lion' or 'meow like a cat' or 'hoot like an owl' or 'growl like a bear'.

Both books have a large shiny format. Used at home or at school the child can match words and pictures and learn new words and meanings easily. Learning things like 'shake my head' (nursery age children sometimes nod instead of shaking their heads) or to 'puff my cheeks' or 'wiggle my nose' can be most useful!

MS

the rather quaint idioms. Not 'feeling up to snuff' is now being dropped - oh so casually - into general conversation! For the very young it can be problematic when an author introduces changes into or tries to jazz up an established folk tale but in this case it does work most of the time - but we all felt that Red Riding Hood should also have said 'What big ears you've got, Grandma!' so I have had to add it in to any reading!

JS

Let's Go!

Anne Sulzer, Kookaburra, 0 333 48712 5, £1.75

As we swing into summer time and holidays and (hopefully) sunny weather, here is a seasidey book that is a little bit different, told by the family dog.

The story moves along briskly, starting as the family sets off for a picnic and the dog is squeezed into the boot surrounded by paraphernalia for a day out of doors. What follows includes chasing seagulls, sniffing about on the beach, going on a fishing trip and falling into the sea ... (we are given a dog's eyewall of under the water). Going home in the car, the dog falls asleep dreaming about the lovely day he has had.

This is a most enjoyable read; through the dog we are given a notion about what it is like to be smaller than everyone else and having to go along with the adults who are in charge, a position most children can relate to. Definitely to be recommended as a summer story.

MS

One Bear at Bedtime

Mick Inkpen, Picture Knight, 0 340 42841 4, £2.50

This book is a real joy. It is charming, delightfully absurd and just perfect for bedtime. The idea is deceptively simple, a counting book in which a little boy imagines creatures in the most bizarre situations as he procrastinates his way to bed. The book climaxes in a monster with ten heads who, as one of my children said gleefully, would take 'ages and ages and ages to kiss goodnight'.

JS

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.

Infant/Junior

Brown-ears

Stephen Lawhead, ill. Robert Geary, Lion,

0 7459 1548 5, £1.75

This story is pure magic! Stephen Lawhead is a new

author to me although he apparently writes science fiction and fantasy books for adults. I started by feeling

faintly uncomfortable with the Kipling-style dialogue with the reader but came to appreciate that it really does work! The



children loved the cliff hangers at the end of each chapter and the bitter-sweet ending produced many thoughtful faces.

Brown-ears, a floppy bunny belonging to Ross, has a lamentable tendency to get lost. The story begins as the family, returning from holiday, lose him in the middle of the night on the bus to Oxford. The very real loss that Ross feels is treated sensitively and the adventures and characters that Brown-ears encounters kept all my infants on the edge of their seats. It could be nightmare-provoking though, so some care needs to be taken as to when the reading breaks occur. JS

The Gingerbread Man in Winter

Elizabeth Walker, Beaver, 0 09 955420 8, £1.99

The second book about the boastful, innocent and jolly gingerbread man who is busy finding out about Christmas, stoats and broken legs, among other hazards of life on the run. Both these stories were very popular with middle and top infants who enjoyed the sideways look at the everyday and the humour of the gingerbread man's response to it.

The books are ideal for children moving on to fluent independent reading at five or six; an interest level to suit them but quite a demanding text. They read aloud very well, too. LW

Farmer Beans and the Pantry Frog

Frank Moffatt, Picture Puffins, 0 14 050 859 7, £2.50

A truly delightful story! It is exciting to see that so much excellent Australian and New Zealand literature is coming to light in this country now. This is the story of Ralph, a frog of determined disposition, who decides on an illicit move into the farmhouse. He is gently taken further and further afield by the farmer each morning only to return each

evening until he is finally driven away by car and so can no longer find his way back. After too peaceful a night the farmer and his dogs realise that they have come to miss him and set out to try to get him back. JS

Roger Takes Charge!

Susanna Gretz, Picture Lions, 0 00 662897 4, £2.25

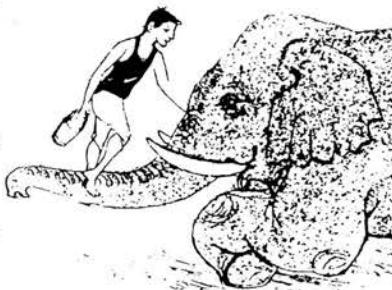


Another winner from Susanna Gretz. Roger the pig, an ever popular anti-hero with the children, wreaks his revenge on the bumptious Flo when they are left to babysit his younger brother Nelson. Their battle for supremacy rages and Gretz's wicked humour gleefully emerges, especially in the character of Nelson, the typical bystander who, although rooting for his brother, is more than half enjoying the drama! JS

The Little Master of the Elephant

Partap Sharma, Young Piper, 0 330 30487 9, £1.99

Set in India and with their basis in traditional tales, these four stories centre on young Chintu and Vivek the elephant, his clever friend.



Their adventures provide an entertaining and thought-provoking read for young juniors, as well as a good read-aloud for any group of children over about six. With still comparatively few books written about Indian characters, it is a great pity that the cover illustration depicts a boy of anything but Asian appearance, in stark contrast to Jeroo Roy's illustrations throughout the book. JB

Willisk's Tooth

Andrew Martyr and Paula Lawford, Picture Corgi, 0 552 52494 8, £2.25

This was not a success for me. There are two basic illogicalities in the plot which bothered me; why would a sneeze wedge you into a dentist's chair? Surely you would sneeze yourself out of it? And why would a rope round your middle help to pull a bad tooth out? I am also very tired of the enormous turnip format (except in *The Enormous Turnip*, of course) in which everyone pulls and pulls and pulls and suddenly . . . POP! etc., etc. Too predictable, too unlikely. Nice illustrations though. LW

Arthur's Teacher Trouble

Marc Brown, Picture Corgi, 0 552 52508 1, £2.50

This book suffers badly from the common publishers' delusion that *all* books can travel from one country to another with no more than the most token attempt to adjust the content.

Arthur, who is some sort of animal, goes to an American school full of 'kids' who sit in an auditorium, have 200-word spelling tests, are called students, have lockers and are, in short, in such an alien world that my children couldn't understand what was going on until I had explained. And when I had it wasn't worth the effort. The words 'first grade' are changed to 'infants', the only attempt I could find to pay attention to the text at all. This probably works very well in America; I cannot think of any reason not to leave it there. LW

The Worm Book

Janet and Allan Ahlberg, Picture Lions, 0 00 663361 7, £2.25

This book really needs a health warning on it, 'Bad jokes can damage your health' or something. If you can listen to knock, knock jokes or elephant jokes without flinching, then this is for you. If you can't, then leave it to the seven and eight-year-olds who will love every page!

Full of visual puns and comic pictures about worms in every possible and impossible guise, my class loved this and read the deadpan text in fits of laughter. The Ahlbergs have the knack of writing true multilayered text and there is something in this to amuse from the age of about six to adult level . . . as long as you are strong enough for it! LW

Jessie Runs Away

Rachel Anderson and Shelagh McNicholas, 0 00 673293 3

Houdini Dog

Rose Impey and Jolyne Knox, 0 00 673366 2

Nina's Machines

Peter Firmin, 0 00 673292 5

Young Lions, £1.75 each

These three books in the 'Jets' series of easy-to-read books that look like short novels are perfectly competent and unexceptional. The most interesting is *Jessie Runs Away* which is about a Down's child but which never once mentions the fact in the text, although the cover does. All that the text says is that Jessie didn't know or understand as many things as her younger sister did and any further information is gathered from the illustrations. It is a sympathetic story of how Jessie feels when she forgets how to find her family and all children can identify with her feelings.

Houdini Dog is a jolly tale of a family who adopt a dog and then have a problem trying to name it and *Nina's Machines* is a feminist story about a girl inventor set, unusually, in some indeterminate medieval period.

'Jets' are all based on the same format: short, easy text, lots and lots of pictures with speech bubbles and a light, often jokey, touch with the story. Children of about six who are fluent readers but haven't the stamina for dense text enjoy them and although none will ever be great literature, I haven't come across any real dud in the series and they are always good value. LW

Haffertee Hamster

0 7459 1515 9

Haffertee Goes Exploring

0 7459 1516 7

Haffertee Goes to School

0 7459 1517 5



Haffertee's First Christmas

0 7459 1518 3

Haffertee's First Easter

0 7459 1519 1

Haffertee's New House

0 7459 1514 0

Janet and John Perkins, Lion, £1.25 each

These six Haffertee books have been reissued in bright new covers with a free bookmark inside each book. They look very attractive and the stories, about a little girl

with the eccentric name of Diamond Yo and her toy hamster, are pitched straight at the six to seven-year-old newly fluent reader. At this level they are very successful. Little girls, particularly, liked them. They are simply written and domestic, arranged in short chapters and well dotted with line drawings.

For my taste, however, there is a great problem. This is that they are heavily religious in content. The entire purpose of the books is to put over to children the teachings of Christianity. Woven into each book, with varying degrees of unnaturalness, are little homilies on prayer, God, friends, the Crucifixion and so on. There is something too contrived and sermonising and earnest about it all. Taking an incident in which the garage gets untidy and then having a character say 'It reminds me of what happened in the Temple at Jerusalem' seems too near the 'Life, you know, is like a tin of sardines' school of religion for me to take it seriously.

However these books were well liked by some children because they are so easy to read and if the message they offer is one that you would want your children to hear then these will be ideal for infant assemblies and Sunday schools as well as for children to read for themselves. LW

A Strange Visitor

Mary O'Toole, ill. Craig Smith, Kookaburra, 0 333 48711 7, £1.75

I have very mixed feelings about this book. Mary O'Toole has retold an old Scottish tale about a lonely old lady who longs for a visitor. One cold, dark night there is a knock at the door and two skeleton feet walk in and settle in front of the comfortable armchair. Gradually the rest of the skeleton appears and, as the old lady questions each part of the body, we build up with rollicking repetition until finally and awfully the skull roars that it came to get her. A lot of the Infants took it in their stride but a number were very disturbed by it. It might be better as a picture book for younger Juniors and could be very successful with slow readers at this stage. JS

Feelings

Aliki, Picture Piper, 0 330 29408 3, £2.99

The blurb at the back of this book says 'Read this book and you will feel terrific!' and it's true! This is one of the only books I've found that deals sensitively with the whole gamut of emotions that children - and adults - have to learn to cope with. Jealousy, insecurity, wonder, fear, embarrassment, boredom and pure rage are all there and the vicarious excitement of sharing them safely provokes an electric response in all who read this book. It is a must for every classroom if not for every child! JS

The Tyger Voyage

Richard Adams, ill. Nicola Bayley, Picturemac, 0 333 48380 4, £2.95



A new full-sized paperback edition of a book first published some 13 years ago which received great acclaim, became a best-seller and acquired something of an adult cult following. I was not among its devotees then and, whilst I can admire Nicola Bayley's finely detailed, sometimes jewel-like paintings, I haven't warmed any to this rhyming tale of the Dubbs' adventures on land and sea, nor did my junior readers show any enthusiasm for it. JB

Kangaroo Court

Mary O'Toole, ill. Keith McEwan, Kookaburra, 0 333 48710 9, £1.75

One of the 'Kookaburra' series originally published down under, this tells in rhyme of a succession of Australian animals who announce the impending arrival of 'a terrible monster' to a disbelieving judge. Each animal adds to the description but receives the same reply until finally a gorilla appears behind the judge's chair.

I'm not sure what children will make of this slightly surreal tale with its rather obscure theme; it certainly left me somewhat bemused. JB

Dragon Air

Ann Ruffell, ill. Andrew Brown, Young Corgi 'By Myself', 0 552 52531 6, £1.75

Another in the series about Gribble the dragon who is, in this story, intent on winning the Great Dragon Race despite the dastardly cheating of his next-door neighbour Cadwallader. As usual it is a highly moral tale as Gribble struggles with his conscience and loses the race by rescuing a pilot teetering on the brink of disaster. Gribble fans enjoyed it and it was borrowed by many, particularly the book scalping hunters amongst us - those who adore getting all of a long series under their belts! JS

Junior/Middle

Awful Annie Stories

J B Simpson, Puffins, 0 14 03.2438 0, £1.99

Awful Annie is really something of a misnomer; certainly the narrator of these two tales is a spirited character who knows her own mind but essentially she's a likeable young miss who just manages to get on the wrong side of her parents and other adults from time to time. In the first story Annie's Great Aunt Binkie arrives for her dreaded annual visit: dreaded because of the awful dress she always makes for Annie. However, things turn out differently on this visit and Annie's long-held wish is unexpectedly fulfilled. 'Nippy Numbers' is a mathematical aid lent to Annie by Mr Trenchman who gives extra maths lessons.

Annie, however, is unimpressed by the piece of technology and accidentally leaves it at a jumble sale. Matters go from bad to worse for poor Annie but all ends happily and the lesson Annie learns is certainly not a mathematical one.

Told in the first person, these stories have a slightly old-

fashioned appeal to them which is reflected in John Lawrence's delightful line drawings. The humorous telling combined with good characterisation make this book an entertaining read for juniors. JB

Louhi, Witch of North Farm

Toni de Gerez, ill. Barbara Cooney, Picture Puffins, 0 14 050.529 6, £2.95

This retelling of a Finnish folk tale, in which Louhi steals the sun and the moon but is frightened by Seppo, the Smith, into returning them, needs a fair degree of sophistication to listen to and even more to read. One of the characters, Vainamoinen, has the sort of name that thousands of 'read-to-yourself' children will never know how to pronounce ... they'll just skip it!

But this is a very attractive book with beautiful, evocative, not over-arty, paintings of sweeping snow scenes or fresh spring meadows. The text is musical, occasionally unexpected and humorous. LW

Mindbenders

Nicholas Fisk, Puffins, 0 14 03.2164 0, £1.75

Mental magic is all very well but when a vivarium full of ants tune into it, the lives of Vinny and Toby begin to go out of control. Vinny's mind is invaded by the Queen's voice; large ants hatch and, as a result of an accident, escape into the world. There follows a fierce battle fought on both mental and physical planes and a kind of victory which leaves things open to further disturbing possibilities.

Fisk combines both science and magic in this exciting story which is told in an economical style and includes some interesting characters, not the least, Aunt Craven. Try it with middle juniors. JB

The Magic Ark

Brian Price-Thomas, Picturemac, 0 333 48436 3, £2.95

An unusual fantasy which captures a magical moment - his sixth birthday - in a lonely boy's childhood. The boy watches as his mysterious neighbour carves wooden

animals for his ark. Then on his birthday he receives an unusual present from Mr Antrobus and the two of them go off on a dream trip in the ark over the world to return the animals to their natural habitats.



The text is narrated by the boy in a seemingly straightforward manner but it raises questions, poses puzzles and hints at meanings for the reader to interpret: Who is this strange man? What does Grandad know about him? Why isn't the world young all the time? The detailed watercolour illustrations echo the dreamy nature of this imaginative and enigmatic tale as do the small line and grey wash drawings.

JB

Pirates

Colin and Jacqui Hawkins, Picture Lions, 0 00 663158 4, £2.50

One of a very popular series which has previously featured the likes of witches and vampires, this is a lighthearted look at the scourges of the high seas under such headings as 'Pirate Personalities', 'Pirate Pops', 'Treasure Islands' and 'Pirates in Petticoats', with amusingly annotated, hilarious drawings and accompanying additional details. There is a deceptive amount of reading in this book which will appeal as strongly to the anti-literates as to the avid reader of seven to eleven. It also can act as a stimulus for children to write their own versions.

JB



A simply told, knockabout tale, spiced up with a couple of touches of Dahlian muckiness, that would probably appeal to lower juniors seeking a slightly gutsier perspective on woodland life than that provided by Potter and Grahame.

GH

Bunnicula

James and Deborah Howe, 0 00 673276 3

Howliday Inn

James Howe, 0 00 673048 5

Young Lions, £1.95 each

A literate dog, named Harold, is the narrator of this unusual story of a vampire rabbit. Harold lives with the Monroes, an American family with two sons and a cat, Chester. Bunnicula is a baby rabbit discovered in the cinema during a Dracula film by one of the Monroe boys. At first the new pet seems harmless enough but Chester isn't convinced and then strange things start happening: white tomatoes with 'suspicious marks in the skin', for instance.

Those juniors willing to suspend their disbelief sufficiently will very likely enjoy this extremely tall tale; I however found it just too far fetched.

Also narrated by Harold, more obviously American and even more far-fetched is **Howliday Inn**. This story tells of Harold and Chester's visit to Chateau Bow-Wow (or Howliday Inn as Chester renames it) when the Monroes take a holiday. Again Chester assumes the role of detective, allows his fertile imagination to run riot and it is not long before he has a pair of dachshunds classed as werewolves and another of the residents as a murderer.

Yes, there is a mystery and a crook (not a murderer though), but the latter is a human, one of those in charge of the kennels, and the mystery is nothing like that imagined by Chester and, more latterly, Harold himself. But then that's the whole point of the story. Readers who liked **Bunnicula** will

probably also be amused by this rather longer, very shaggy dog story.

JB

Oliver's Lucky Day

0 14 03.2780 0

Oliver and the Lucky Duck

0 14 03.2781 9

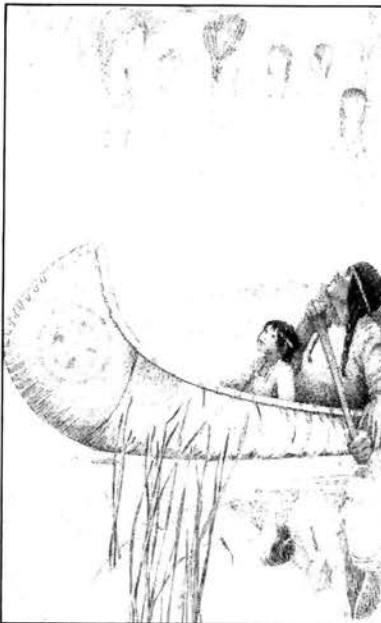
Page McBrier, Puffin, £1.75 each

Two slight volumes featuring the tribulations of animal lover Oliver as he struggles to establish a pet-minding business, assisted by his schoolfriends and hampered by the archetypal bully. The plots are pedestrian and predictable; we know from the start that Rusty the bully will be worsted in both books, and that Oliver will eventually accept the superior wisdom of his strong female pal concerning his desire to keep a wild duck as a pet. The characters, both human and animal, are stereotypical. However, the style is very accessible, and pet-enthusiasts in search of an easy read might find these books amusing.

GH

Hiawatha

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, ill. Susan Jeffers, Picturemac, 0 333 48718 4, £3.95



This is the paperback edition of an abridgement first published in Britain in 1985. The cover, featuring a somewhat cloyingly comely Hiawatha, is misleading, giving no indication that only about 100 of the nearly 6,000 lines of Longfellow's classic poem are available here. A recent reading of this sample to a group of fourth-years convinced me that the chanting rhythms and mythical imagery of this masterpiece retain their appeal. Ms Jeffers' illustrations present a fusion of sentimentality and visionary magic, and may help attract new readers to an exploration of the full-scale epic.

GH

King Conger

Robert Lee, Magnet, 0 416 13152 2, £1.99

The fourth story featuring the adventures of the pelagic detective Rock Salmon revolves around an expedition mounted by the small but technologically advanced fish of Atlantis to film a seamanster from the legendary Precific Ocean. As the organisers of this venture are implicated in the murder of a Hollyweed producer, Rock infiltrates the expedition and shares in its dangers.

I found the style more catching than fetching. The plot is shallow, and the storyline choked by a veritable Sargasso of puns, parades and allusions to show-business and literature. However, I can think of many children and one or two adults who, combining an interest in marine biology with a taste for wordplay on the level of 'Ike and Tina Tuna', may well be hooked by this book.

GH

Meanwhile Back at the Ranch

Trina Hakes Noble, ill. Tony Ross, Beaver, 0 09 954290 0, £2.50

A very tall tale, told in deadpan style, of Rancher Hicks and his wife Elna. In his eyes, Hicks' trip to Sleepy Gulch is full of exciting incidents such as a turtle crossing the road and a prolonged game of draughts. 'Meanwhile back at the ranch' Elna's dull day includes an oil strike, a winning lottery ticket and a visit from a movie producer, not to mention an animal population explosion and resulting construction work.

This preposterous tale which is essentially an expanded joke is wittily illustrated in aptly eccentric fashion by Ross, who cleverly manages to capture both the frenzied incidents of Elna's day as well as the monotony of Sleepy Gulch. Great fun for solo readers of seven and over.

JB

Mysteries of the Seals

Rosalind Kerven, Puffin, 0 14 03.2802 5, £1.99

This topical mystery/adventure set in a Scottish fishing community moves at a brisk enough pace to entertain most youngsters and begs important questions about how we manage our natural resources and especially how we treat declining animal species.

The villain, Mr da Silva, is as stereotyped as Mrs Northcote-McPherson, the battling lady scientist who makes Boudicca seem like a Womble. He represents self-interest at its most grotesque, whilst the reclusive sea captain is as mystically mad as a hatter and the two child protagonists unerringly fetch up in the right place at the right time. Young readers will enjoy it!

DB

Uncle Charlie Weasel's Winter

Sam McBratney, Magnet, 0 416 13162 X, £1.75

The villainous Charlie Weasel, thief, liar and wino, evicts a band of courageous mice from a mysterious item of discarded furniture, before using it as a base from which to conduct a campaign of plunder against the winter foodstocks of the other forest animals.

Middle/Secondary

Mr Moon's Last Case

Brian Patten, Puffins, 0 14 03.2714 2, £1.99

This 'original fantasy brimming with life' (cover) has taken since 1975 to reach paperback! It's quite a low-key fantasy, which seems to be pervaded by sadness, mainly for the pursued leprechaun, Nameon, lost outside his own world and time and in danger of gross exploitation if caught. Sadness too for his pursuer, the ex-detective Mr Moon, weary, sick and obsessive about tracking this unique quarry on what will be his swansong.

There's a fund of inventive ideas, which have not dated, and a modest humour which could appeal to fantasy lovers looking for something different.

DB

Groosham Grange

Anthony Horowitz, Methuen Teens, 0 416 10172 0, £1.95

Those who've read other Anthony Horowitz books will know what to expect – awful puns and a great deal of play with the style. Groosham Grange seems to be the answer to Mr and Mrs Eliot's need for a school for David. He's just been expelled from one school and this one has enticing features of discipline, one holiday per year, a head with two heads and some rum goings on. Awful jokes are the main reason for much of the story but, with a more serious turn, the story has David attempting to escape what turns out to be a school for vampires and the ending is satisfactorily lacking in cliché. My hardback copy is battered from frequent reading so I am pleased to have a cheaper version to satisfy those people, second and third-year boys in particular, who say that they can't find anything they want to read.

AJ

The Woods at the End of Autumn Street

Lois Lowry, Lions, 0 00 673054 X, £1.95

This is a fine and wonderful book, carefully crafted and with a deeply moving and shocking climax. From the beautiful opening, conjuring up the people of Liz's childhood (very nicely caught by the cover) we are into the world of childhood memory which in so many ways seems to be part of a real autobiography. The war, father leaving to fight, and moving to live with grandparents are the starters. But it is the freshness of childhood memory and confusion which marks this out – and the way in which the friendship with the black

cook, Tatie, and her grandson, Charles, is developed. In the apparent small canvas of time and geography we feel with Liz the complexities and fears of childhood and adult life. In coping with relations and neighbours, the absence of her father and the friendship with a black boy, we seem to encounter a whole panorama of human emotions and motivations. It's a marvellous piece of writing, particularly the final section, and the kind of book that makes you think about teaching with it.

AJ

Stormbird

Elsie McCutcheon, Puffin, 0 14 03.2639 1, £2.25

It's the early part of the century and Jenny's father is swindled, forced to sell up, take her from London to the Suffolk fishing village of his childhood and leave her with a strange and cold Aunt while he tries to make money as a fisherman. In befriending the son of the rich Gale family, Jenny gradually learns about a tragic past that involved her Aunt. The apparent death of her father and the tragic events of the past build up to a dramatic climax. It's a good, strong story with a nicely detailed historical and geographical background.

AJ

Mrs Flannagan's Trumpet

0 552 52528 6

Our John Willie

0 552 52525 1

Catherine Cookson, Corgi, £1.99 each

Such good yarns and such basic elements of story shared in different plots. The young hero managing without parents, the apparently hard but really kind older lady, villains and treachery. Add to that a strong nineteenth-century and north-east setting and you have the basic fabric. **Mrs Flannagan's Trumpet** with its storms and smuggling takes a while to pick up pace but **Our John Willie** is a cracker from the mining disaster of the opening paragraph. Catherine Cookson seems to know so many of the responsive strings of reading and she tells her stories with such verve that it isn't hard to see why she has been, and is, so popular. In these new, bright covers I'm sure these two will be well-read and enjoyed.

AJ

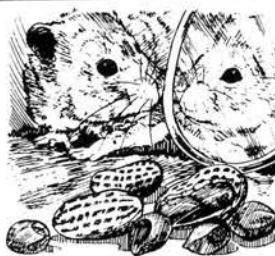
The Sea Child

Carolyn Sloan, Piper, 0 330 30594 8, £1.99

The Sands is an area now thought to be uninhabited after the sea cut it off from the mainland and covered its

houses. It is at this edge of the real and substantial world that Jennie and the book exist. Her father, Danny, now looks after her alone, since the disappearance of her mother who was, perhaps, a mermaid. Jennie's life is mirrored in many ways by Lisa, who lives in the nearby 'real' world of the mainland village. The story and what follows is perhaps conjured up by the isolated Lisa who has known of Jennie and her father through stories told to her. Jennie is allowed, briefly, to visit the mainland and finds herself caught between two worlds and the pull of a third, mermaid, life. The confidence of the telling and the skill of the writer make this short book memorable for its dreamlike quality. It's a richly suggestive and beautiful story.

AJ



As a fictional furry animal, Houdini is a refreshingly uncuriously individual, and his struggles to resolve the conflict between domestic security and the perils of freedom might evoke some sympathy among older children pondering similar choices.

GH

Double Vision

Gilli Wright, Lions, 0 00 672891 X, £2.25

A promising exploration involving a school refuser gets lost in a fairly improbable caper involving an eccentric old man and a young girl seen across a town through binoculars. However, it is redeemed at the end by Sam Leonard's liberation from his self-imposed, multi-storey isolation, when he can finally expiate his guilt for his father's accidental death and begin to reconstruct his young life.

This is a book that improves upon reflection so it might be best recommended to sensitive readers.

DB

Riverman

Allan Baillie, Magnet, 0 416 06452 3, £1.99

You don't get many novels set in turn-of-the-century Tasmania! For Tim Walker it looks as though his diminutive size will make it extra tough for him to find a niche in the gritty, aggressive, pioneering world of his father and Uncle Larry. But when that world destroys the father, the uncle takes Tim on a voyage up the Franklin River to fell Huon Pines, and Tim discovers more than danger – wider horizons, he also learns a lot about himself and how to live with grief. It's a very boyish book but I doubt it'll make too many strong waves.

DB

A Thief in the Village

James Berry, Puffin, 0 14 03.2679 0, £1.75

An award-winning collection of stories about a Caribbean childhood, which certainly highlights cultural differences, but at the same time emphasises plenty of points of mutual contact – the cruelty that children show to other children they deem as outcasts, the desire to identify with a group, the freedom of owning a bike and the craving for a place in a family group. These stories deserve a place in any classroom for they are well-written, lively and an immensely valuable addition to the multi-cultural library.

DB

I, Houdini

Lynne Reid Banks, Lions, 0 00 673363 8, £1.95

This is the autobiography of an exceptionally resourceful hamster who has reached old age after a life of great escapes. The narrative pace is well maintained as he reflects upon his experiences of captivity, liberation, sex, religion and the brutality of Man and Nature.

VR

Bonny Starr and the Riddles of Time

Gwen Grant, Lions, 0 00 672876 6, £2.25

A book for more able juniors, this, with its magic and mystery, riddles and rhymes, ghosts and witches. It deals with good and evil and time and space, which perhaps only the very young can face undaunted and accept.

On her way to the circus, Bonny Starr finds a key which she discovers – after visitations from the banished but kindly Black Monk and the evil Dazzling Clown – is the key to Eternity. Bonny, her brother, the monk and Mrs Medley, a witch, undergo tests and adventures in order to keep the key from the destructive Clown. After a process of suffering and personal sacrifice the door to Eternity presents the group with two riddles and when they are answered it is the Black Monk who eventually obtains his rightful place in Time.

The story is exciting and intriguing but not always fully explained – for example, the answers to the riddles are never given. Incidentally, the cover suggests that the illustrator has never read the book – the Clown is misrepresented and Bonny unconvincing as a child of 1949.

Older Readers

The Sixth Seal

Mary Wesley, Pan Piper, 0 330 30513 1, £2.50

Another post world destruction novel. High seriousness although often funny in a way that doesn't always seem to be intentional. The world is ending in plague and coloured snow and those who survive, who happened to be underground (for one excuse or another), find only hair, dust and dentures in place of bodies. John Wyndham does this kind of thing well but I was never sure that Mary Wesley knew what she wanted to do. There are some thoughtful elements woven in but it remains a curious mixture.

AJ

Mac

John MacLean, Pan Horizons, 0 330 30489 5, £2.50

Mac seeks to explore the appalling trauma of sexual assault – a teenage boy, the Mac of the title, is assaulted by his doctor. His inability to articulate what has happened makes him suppress the anger and guilt he feels as a result and begins to destroy his school career, his relationships with his family and with Jenny, his girlfriend.



Some characters – Mac's first counsellor, for example – are unacceptably stereotyped, a ploy by the author to accentuate the quality of the main protagonists. This is a largely unnecessary manoeuvre as many of the characters – particularly Mac and Jenny – convince the reader on their own merits.

Some of MacLean's writing contains heavyhanded symbolism – Mac and Jenny walk into 'the first morning sun' after their reconciliation – but this is by and large an acceptably written book, if rather overwhelmingly American. Offer this selectively – there is a smattering of four-letter words – to third and fourth-year pupils.

VR

Trouble with Vanessa

Jean Ure, Corgi Freeway, 0 552 52428 X, £1.95

This is the first in a trilogy about four students embarking on an Arts and Drama course at sixth-form college. Vanessa, Kate, Ned and Danny bring very different experiences and expectations to the new term and one of the book's strengths is its refusal to be overwhelmed by disparity. Instead – largely through the medium of the developing relationship between Ned and Vanessa – the reader is treated to Ure's wryly accurate portrait of student life: uncertainty; precocity; bombast – and that fierce energy peculiar to the young. Although there is sufficient to allow the less committed reader to become involved, the language is often pleasingly challenging and likely to positively engage a keen third or fourth-year reader. Put it in the book box and/or library – and wait for the next!

VR

The Man with Eyes like Windows

Gareth Owen, Lions, 0 00 672776 X, £2.25

Routine is stultifying – too often a crippling necessity. Thus I have sympathy for Harold Langton, whose dreams give him eyes like windows – full of glimpses of freedom and adventure. On his current extended leave from his family he is following his latest dream of having his songs recognised and recorded by his one-time singing partner, now an international recording star. His son, Louie, becomes worried as 'Uncle' Edgar is trying – with some success – to win his mother's affections. Louie sets off alone to find his father and bring him back.

The book makes interesting reading but although lip-service is paid to Harold's philosophies the issues which are raised are never fully developed. The fairytale ending deadens the impact of the book still further. It does have a certain charm and humour, however, and would probably fill a niche in class libraries for competent – and restless – third-year boys.

VR

Visions

Edited by Donald R Gallo, Teen Tracks, 0 00 673222 4, £2.50

Repeating the successful formula of *Sixteen* this collection has 19 new stories. It's good value for the quantity and range of stories although many teenage readers seem to dislike both the brevity of the short story and the apparent lack of consistency. That's a pity because there are some

very enjoyable things here and a group of stories that I'd like pupils to read and a couple of stories I'd like to read with them, including 'The Good Girls' by Fran Arrick, about child abuse. It might be fun to predict the ending for 'Great Moves' by Sandy Asher, which has the following: 'Somewhere at the top of the heap, women were on the move, striving for justice, equality and world peace. Down here, we were still stuck scrambling for boys. When were we going to make a great move of our own?' A good book for book boxes and department libraries.

AJ

There's Always Danny

Jean Ure, Corgi Freeway, 0 552 52429 8, £1.99

Jean Ure is an assured writer for teenagers and in this second part of a trilogy she has the half-sisters, Kate and Vanessa, continuing their South London College Drama course and coping with the independence of their own flat. A large number of issues are raised – new ones like AIDS and older ones about relationships. It's all done competently and busily and Kate's education, formal and informal, apparently leaves her wiser and maturer. There's a belief in the healthiness of raising issues, of confronting and facing up to them by talking about them (and writing about them) and it's difficult to not to agree, in part anyway.

AJ

Facing Up

Robin F Brancato, Penguin Plus, 0 14 03 2784 3, £2.25

American teenage life seems frantic at the best of times. Here, in between making grades, making money and growing up, Dave finds himself caught in the middle between his loyalty to his flamboyant best friend, Jep, and his pleasure at the attention Jep's beautiful girlfriend, Susan, begins to pay him. There's plenty of incident, much dramatisation of the conflict and a final section which allows Dave to come to terms with the consequences of all that has happened.

AJ

The Power of the Shade

Jacqueline Wilson, Teen Tracks, 0 00 672970 3, £2.50

Misfit May is in just about everyone's shade. There are the full facts of her artist mother's death, whose memory is over-fondly perpetuated by a conspiratorial menage-a-trois between her aunt and grandparents; there's

her rich, exhibitionist, spoilt friend Selina and then Robin Campbell, the writer in residence, who wreaks havoc with her sensitivity and gullibility. No wonder the darker power of the moon goddess so attracts her when Selina suggests that May could summon help to attain her heart's desire.

This is a very readable, deft tale which works on many levels. Ms Wilson is one of our currently most gifted authors for young people; she has a loyal following amongst my classes and I'm sure this one will not fail to please.

DB

Kumquat May, I'll Always Love You

Cynthia D Grant, Teen Tracks, 0 00 673237 2, £2.50

'Funny, all the secrets in people's lives. We're icebergs only the tips of us showing.' I devoured this long, wise novel in a sitting. Full of wry humour and telling wisdom it reads like a teenage *Lake Woebegone*. The small town claustrophobia drives the resourceful Olivia to attempt, successfully as it happens, to conceal the fact of her mother's sudden and eccentric departure on a Greyhound bus, when she'd only left to buy margarine two and a half years previously! Lies, deceit and falsity abound and multiply. No wonder telling someone the truth was a relief, but that someone was to prove traitorous and an arrant deceiver himself. Very highly recommended.

DB

Ruby

Rosa Guy, Penguin Plus, 0 14 03 2859 9, £2.50

This rather joyless novel received a mixed reception when first published in 1976. It's very much an issue novel and one of the issues is lesbianism, here between two black girls, Daphne, revolution-minded, cool, sophisticated, old beyond her years, and Ruby, lonely, abused by her bullish father and despised by her classmates – 'What am I to do? I am like a desolate island in a stormy sea.' Their relationship gives Ruby confidence but at a price and one does wonder at the end whether she will ever have the courage to break away and fight for her rights – it is to be hoped that she does.

This completes a set begun with *The Friends* and *Edith Jackson*. It's definitely for older and experienced readers with plenty of staying power.

DB

Audio Tapes

More Naughty Little Sister Stories

Dorothy Edwards, read by Maggie McCarthy, Puffin Cover to Cover, one cassette, 75 mins, £3.99



All About My Naughty Little Sister

Dorothy Edwards, read by Felicity Kendal, Listen for Pleasure, two cassettes, 2 hours, £5.99

Here is a feast of those cosy 'Naughty Little Sister' stories which are ideal for quiet times. My Naughty Little Sister's adventures are absorbing and homely: she sees a big white swan fly through the washing onto the lawn; she's moved to pity the poor boy in the story so much that she sticks her sandwich between the pages for him; she's frightened of Mrs Cocoa's vacuum cleaner until Mr Cocoa teaches her to feed 'Charlie' with fluff... Felicity Kendal's exaggerated expression is perhaps for a younger audience than Maggie McCarthy's 'straighter' narration. Both will be enjoyed and are unabridged.

(*More Naughty Little Sister Stories*, Methuen, 0 416 16680 6, £5.95; Magnet, 0 416 22000 2, £1.50 pbk; *All About My Naughty Little Sister*, Methuen, 0 416 10830 X, £6.95)

Spot's First Picnic

Spot's Hospital Visit
Eric Hill, read by Peter Hawkins, Tempo Storytime, book and cassette, 20 mins, £2.49 each title

These two Spot cassettes have turn-over tones so children can follow the words or the very young can follow the story by the pictures. The

book is a 30-page Tempo paperback full of bold, animated pictures with extended text adapted from the original Heinemann book. The stories are simple and enlivened with sound effects, like the splashing water for Spot's wet picnic. Spot's mum makes the animals an indoor picnic to make up for the soggy sandwiches and Spot's hospital visit turns into a funny afternoon.

(*Spot's First Picnic*, 0 434 94271 5, and *Spot's Hospital Visit*, 0 434 94272 3, Heinemann, £2.50 each)

Stick-a-Tales series

Various authors, anonymous narrators, Pickwick Studio Publications, 24 titles, paperback with 22-28 min tape with storage bag, £2.49 each title
This new series aims to combine reading, listening, playing and learning for 3-6 year olds. The varied titles include *Fairy Stories*, *Colours*, *Time*, *Teddy Ruxpin* and *Henry's Cat*. The 24-page book can be wiped clean and has a brightly illustrated story and four pages of re-usable stickers. Side 1 of the cassette tells the story with a turn-over tone and a concluding song. Side 2 has music and 'sticker-fun' when children are guided to stick on the stickers using imagination and concentration. Older children can read the highlighted 'key words' and match the lower case sticker words to the four pictures down the side of each page. Useful and absorbing.

The Roald Dahl Collection

Read by Roald Dahl, Collins Caedmon, five stories, four cassettes, 3 hrs 44 mins, £14.99
Five vintage Dahl stories: *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*, *The Magic Finger* (the same recording is also available on LP double cassette), *James and the Giant Peach*, *Fantastic Mr Fox* and *The Enormous Crocodile*, boxed together in this quality bargain collection. Although there are other versions of these stories – *Fantastic Mr Fox* well read by Lionel Jefferies on Puffin Cover to Cover; *James and the Giant Peach* is one of Rainbow's imaginatively dramatised Dahl titles for example – these older, re-released recordings are read by the storyteller himself. Not all authors make good narrators. Roald Dahl is an exception; he's a brilliant reader.

(*Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*, Allen & Unwin,

Rachel Redford reviews a selection of recent story tapes.
Reviews are listed in roughly ascending order of listening age.
Prices include VAT unless otherwise indicated.

0 04 823303 X, 7.95;
0 14 03.1824 0, £2.25 pbk *The Magic Finger*, A & U,
0 04 823080 4, £4.95;
0 14 03.0704 4, £1.50 pbk *James and the Giant Peach*,
A & U, 0 04 823078 2, £6.95;
0 14 03.0623 4, £1.99 pbk *Fantastic Mr Fox*, A & U,
0 04 823096 0, £5.95;
0 14 03.2671 5, £1.75 pbk *The Enormous Crocodile*, Cape,
0 224 01579 6, £5.95;
0 14 050.342 0, £2.99 pbk – all paperbacks from Puffin)

Mary Queen of Scots

Eric Melvin, read by Michael Elder and Gerda Stevenson, Whigmaleerie (7 Main Street, Balerno, Edinburgh EH14 7EQ), book and cassette, £5.95. Available separately.

Whigmaleerie is a Scottish company offering over 20 titles, some in special cases for libraries and schools. They cover an inspired range of Scottish tales, traditional and modern, appealing to the under-fives through to secondary school age children, like this title. *Mary Queen of Scots* is an easy way to absorb history. It's a moving series of dramatised reflections on the young Queen's past, beginning with her childhood in France and ending when she was beheaded, her little dog cowering beneath her skirts. The attractively illustrated book follows the tape word by word and is also available in hardback.

How to Eat Fried Worms

Thomas Rockwell, read by Lionel Wilson, Isis Cornerstone Large Print Read-alongs, two cassettes and book, £19.39, or cassettes only, £12.59

This is one of six new American titles carefully read to enable reluctant readers, remedial students and children with low vision to listen and follow the story in book form. The book is a durable Large Print hardback with plenty of lively black and white illustrations. It's a funny story with loads of dialogue, read with zest. Billy's friends bet him 15 dollars he can't eat a worm a day for 15 days. At first, Billy gulps with his eyes 'squinted shut' at the boiled, fried, fricassee, ketchup, piccalilli or horseradish worms. But Billy soon gets to like the 'night crawlers' and his friends try to stop him winning the bet.

(*How to Eat Fried Worms*, Piper, 0 330 25732 3, £1.99 pbk)

Kept in the Dark

Nina Bawden, read by Carole Boyd, Chivers, three cassettes, 3 hrs 46 mins, £11.95 + VAT

This is a gripping story with gradually strengthening sinister undertones. Bosie, Clara and Noel are sent to stay with grandparents they have never met whilst their self-occupied mother goes abroad. The relationship between the grandparents seems strange and the house is lonely. When the suave and friendly step-grandson David suddenly appears, the grandparents seem afraid. Why? David becomes an increasingly threatening mixture of charm and dangerous impetuosity. This is a tense psychological drama. Unabridged and without sound effects, it is excellently read by Carole Boyd who captures in her voice the children's fear and the querulous grandmother. (*Kept in the Dark*, Gollancz, 0 575 03113 1, £7.95; Puffins, 0 14 03.1550 0, £1.99 pbk)

The Pistachio Prescription

Paula Danziger, read by Pat Starr, Chivers, three cassettes, 3 hrs 21 mins, unabridged, £11.95 + VAT

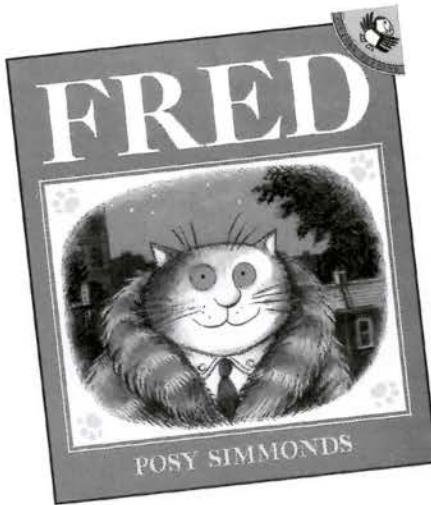
Many a young teenager will identify with Cassie: a beautiful older, nasty sister, a favoured younger brother, fighting parents, a body like a bean pole and eyebrows like bushes. No wonder Cassie is hooked on her comforter – pistachio nuts. Through the story, Cassie has to face the break-up of her parents' marriage, but she also grows in confidence, finds out her sister is just as vulnerable as she is – and kicks the pistachio habit. It's a good American story with a helpful, unobtrusive message read in an appropriately strong American accent. Apart from enjoyment at home, it could be used to stimulate class discussion.

(*The Pistachio Prescription*, Heinemann, 0 434 96576 6, £6.95; Piper, 0 330 30018 0, £1.99 pbk) ■

Rachel Redford is a well-known authority on audio tapes and compiler of Book Trust's *Hear to Read* (1986, 0 85353 403 9, £1.50 non-members, £1.00 members, inc. p&p) available from the Publications Dept, Book Trust, 45 East Hill, London SW18 2QZ.

**Who knows what really goes on
behind closed cat-flaps?**

At last, FRED's secret is out of the bag!



A purrfect Picture Puffin to share and enjoy.

Publication date: 25 May 1989



Vibrant Picture Books from Viking Kestrel



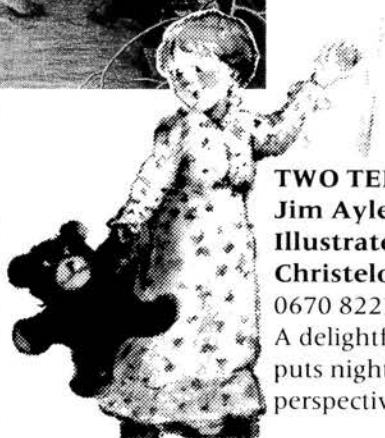
DRAC AND THE GREMLIN
Allan Baillie

Pictures by Jane Tanner
0670 82271 X £6.95 May
An outstanding picture book,
beautifully illustrated, about two
ordinary children's fantasy
world.



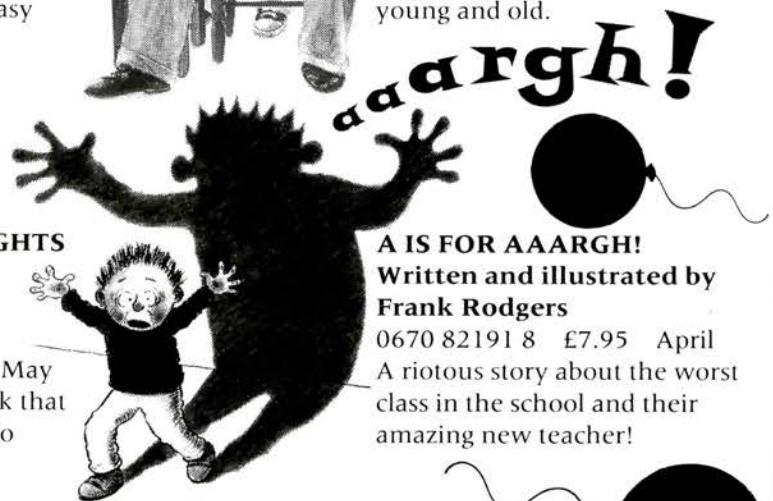
GRANDPA'S SLIDE SHOW

Deborah Gould
Illustrated by Cheryl Harness
0670 82232 9 £7.50 June
A moving story showing the
special relationship between the
young and old.



TWO TERRIBLE FRIGHTS
Jim Aylesworth
Illustrated by Eileen Christelow

0670 82233 7 £6.95 May
A delightful picture book that
puts night-time fears into
perspective.



A IS FOR AAARGH!
Written and illustrated by
Frank Rodgers
0670 82191 8 £7.95 April
A riotous story about the worst
class in the school and their
amazing new teacher!

Viking Kestrel

Authograph No. 56

M. Fiona French

'I'm more keen now on the work I do than perhaps ever before. It still excites me. Though it's the future ideas that are more exciting than the actual carrying out of them – that's hard work!'

Fiona French is slightly built, with sparkling eyes and a hearty, indeed heartening, laugh, which frequently punctuates her talk. She speaks thoughtfully, carefully considering each word before delivering it, reminding the listener that not only is she an artist but a writer too.

She is now firmly established in Norfolk, but much of her early life was spent in travelling with her family, so much so that she insists she comes 'from nowhere in particular'. At Croydon Art College she trained in fine arts and print-making and was blessed with excellent teachers, including Bridget Riley and Charles Keeping ('God bless his cotton socks'). Keeping was extremely generous to the young artist. 'When I was looking for a job, Charles would give me a list of who to see at the publishers, so I would know who I wanted to see before I phoned for an interview. It didn't mean I was any better in the interview, but it did give me a lot of experience.'

Fiona was drawn towards children's picture books for sound practical reasons: 'It's where you get the most pictures, which, because of my training in fine art, I definitely wanted.' She was eventually employed by Oxford University Press and her first book, **Jack of Hearts**, was published by them in 1970. It was at OUP that she developed her particular working-method, the 'cornerstone' of which is the rough. These roughs are drawn in crayon, 'so that I have the freedom to choose exactly how I want to do the



painting'. When the approved roughs come back from the publisher they are traced – 'I just turn them over, scribble on the back and then trace them,' she explains, making it sound as easy as pie. However, the primary importance of roughs was only a gradual development. 'In the first ten years at Oxford I never did any roughs at all, which looking back now seems absolute insanity. They enable me to work about twice as fast, because all the major decisions have been taken.' Up to and including **Hunt the Thimble**, her eighth book, 'I would never know what I was going to put on the next page. Looking back I think "God, how could I have done that? How was it possible?"' To demonstrate her point she turns to a double-spread in **Hunt the Thimble** – the scene in which all the market-produce goes flying into the air – and describes how, during her work on the book, she had received some bad news





which 'completely changed the last part of the book. I went - well, flying into the air and it somehow got into this picture, everything in total chaos!' Fortunately the completed book proved to be a popular and an artistic success, and the chance of such a potentially dangerous change of mind has now been eliminated because the rough acts as a safety-net.

One of the more obvious characteristics of Fiona's work is that - although they are all recognisably her own and no-one else's (the use, for example, of large, almost operatic, figures, often just head and torso) - the style of each book is governed by the needs and concerns of the story. To achieve the necessary 'flavour' she plunders a variety of sources. The inspiration for the figure of Noah in her latest book, **Rise, Shine!**, was suggested by Ethiopian art, which is full of bright colours and geometrics, lending Noah his slightly ritualistic quality. 'Methuen wanted it softened. And from then on,' she adds, with a laugh, 'it was really only my imagination - desperately trying to think of something!' She goes on to list the ingredients used to achieve the historical accuracy of **Hunt the Thimble**: 'Take six books of paintings by Vermeer, as many as you can find of Pieter de Hooch, and a beautiful little book of engravings I found in the V & A. I took photographs of the engravings, chose the parts I needed and then drew them my own way.'

Photographs play a large part in Fiona's preparation. For her research for **Snow White in New York**, 'I had so many books out about what the city looked like and what the people looked like - jazz musicians, contemporary photographs of the clubs in Harlem, the dresses - everything. The wicked stepmother, she came from Erte, and I think the father from Hollywood glamour photos. I saw a street scene of New York recently and it was like my book - and I can't remember how I got it. It's like wearing blinkers, I pick things I'm going to use for information, and then afterwards, rather like an exam, it goes completely out of my mind. Then I want to move onto something different.'

Fiona uses colour to assist her in telling the story, to such a degree that it almost becomes a character in the

story. This is an 'absolutely conscious decision'. In **Cinderella** ('That was a difficult book to get through! There are

so many precedents, so many versions') the dresses of the Ugly Sisters tell the reader a lot about their characters. 'Who but an ugly sister would go to a ball wearing that colour? A heroine wouldn't wear a lurid green like that.' Taking another example of her use of colour as an essential item in the storytelling process, she cites the making of **The Song of the Nightingale**. The book was originally intended to be 'quite realistic' - based on an actual visit to Assisi, together with the inevitable batch of photographs - full of 'greens and happy colours'. She prepared four or five originals to be shown at the Bologna Book Fair, but they were received without enthusiasm. 'So I threw the whole lot out of the window and started again!' Meanwhile, she had discovered a minute engraving of Assisi and this gave her the vital clue as to how the book should be tackled. The engraving was the direct inspiration for the first spread in the book, which shows the grey, oppressive city, brooded over by the encampment of the invading army. 'Where the tents are in my picture, the engraving showed a gibbet, with a man hanging from it, and it was desert - and that's exactly the right flavour . . . the feeling of war, the black of the city and the red of the sky.' And then comes the song of the nightingale, colour bursting into bud on the tree, the dark is banished and the city becomes radiant. It is an exact visual depiction of the healing power of the nightingale's song and a perfect example of Fiona's ability to allow colour (and the lack of it) to carry the burden of the story.

Because she writes most of her books, does she regard herself as a writer as well as an artist? 'A little bit, yes. It's necessity really, because there are very few words that are simple enough and with enough strength for a picture-book. I draw with as finalised text as I possibly can, because if it wasn't I'd feel so insecure that I wouldn't be able to draw. The words are right there from the start.' In the original story of the **Maid of the Wood**, which Fiona discovered ten years before using it, the maid returns back into the tree. 'I thought this was a little too negative. Sad really. So I changed it to what it is now, a little hint of Women's Lib. Endings do have to be relatively happy in books this short . . . to encourage the reader to pick it up again. If it's too nasty they're going to leave it on the shelf.'

It is the painting that causes the headaches - 'especially on the days it doesn't go right! The difficult bits arrive in just the area you were least expecting. Often it is page two because the second page is the one that keeps the continuity going through the book. Now, here I am, back to roughs again, because they have helped me so much and now I know exactly what happens on each page.'

When asked whether she works with a particular audience in mind, her reply is immediate and emphatic. 'No, no,

no. Not when I'm actually painting. Never! Over the years you get to know what sort of story will appeal, it's an instinct.' The proper place to pitch it is 'just meeting the very bright kids, or slightly over the heads of the not so bright ones - but that's all right, that's terrific. Definitely not talking down to them. If I had a seven-year-old or an eight-year-old in my mind while I was writing, then I would be talking down. Essentially I'm making a story that I'd like to read myself.'

The most recent book, **Rise, Shine!**, tells the story of Noah's Ark, using the words of a negro spiritual, though in a slightly modified form. An editor expressed qualms about the possible attitude of American librarians when confronted with the verse 'If you get to heaven before I doosie, doosie, /Tell St Peter to get out the boosie, boosie', so Fiona, with a certain reluctance, has amended the line to 'Tell St Peter, "Don't be so choosy, choosy"'. The artwork is full of colour and wit and, once again, the style appears to be different, incorporating tiny pen-and-ink figures and landscapes in the backgrounds. 'This is perfectly logical,' the ever-practical artist insists. 'You've got a picture of the Ark, and it's got to be big - ! Well, you've just got one double-spread to show this feeling of size, so naturally everything else has to be weeny.' When she first heard the spiritual, sung by a crowd of 3000 children, she thought 'Good heavens, this is marvellous, just the right sort of funny flavour I like, not taking itself too seriously.' Two years later, with the help of one piece of final artwork (subsequently revised), she sold the idea to Methuen.

She thinks that on the whole winning the Kate Greenaway Medal (for **Snow White in New York**) did make a difference. 'I think it opens doors, and it helps with getting work. Instead of saying "Fiona French - who?" they now say "Oh yes, she got the Kate Greenaway Medal," adding with a laugh, "How many years ago?"'

In the immediate future is her current project, a picture-book set in Arizona, and the continuous search for subjects. 'Yes, I do go looking, when I have to. It doesn't fall into your lap, ever. One thing I can be sure of - the next one's going to be better. Having said that, I don't mean specifically the next one. It's always the next book, anyway.' ■

The Books

Rise, Shine!, Methuen, 0 416 08122 3, £5.95

Hunt the Thimble, Oxford, 0 19 279719 0, £3.95

Maid of the Wood, Oxford, 0 19 279798 0, £5.95

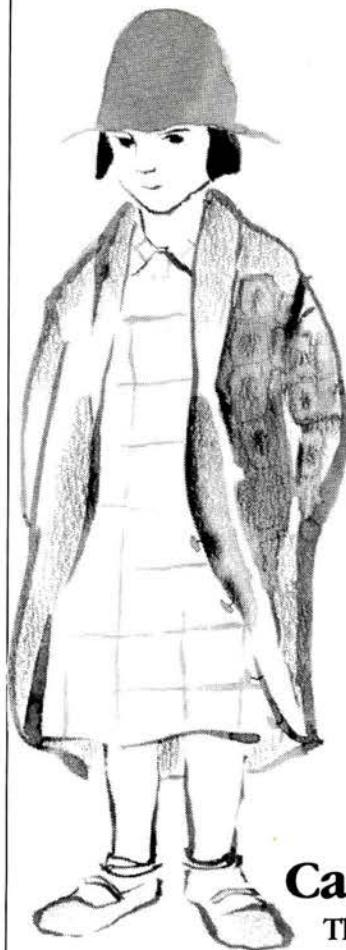
Going to Squintums, Blackie, 0 216 91725 5, £5.95

Snow White in New York, Oxford, 0 19 279808 1, £5.95

Song of the Nightingale, Blackie, 0 216 91952 5, £6.95

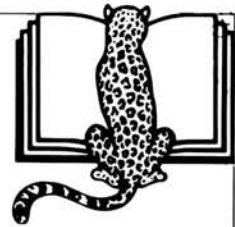
Cinderella, Oxford, 0 19 279841 3, £5.95

Rise, Shine!, Methuen, 0 416 08122 3, £5.95



MUNIA'S WORLD

Cambridge books for children



the moon that taps on the window . . . in . . .
Munia and the Moon

the mystery of the shrinking shoes . . . in . . .
Munia and the Red Shoes

the chatty crocodile with no teeth . . . in . . .
Munia and the Orange Crocodile

Munia invents Mrs Blinco . . . in . . .
Munia and the Day Things Went Wrong

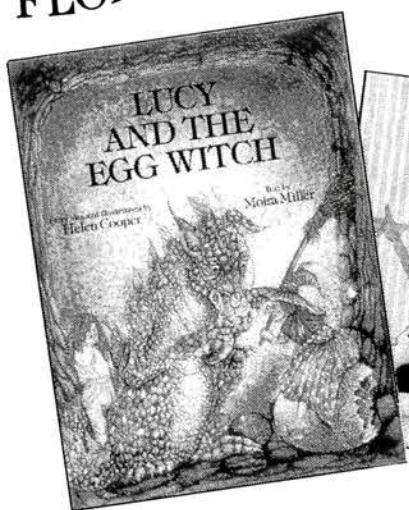
full colour hard cover picture books, at £5.95 net each
Written and illustrated by Asun Balzola



Cambridge University Press

The Edinburgh Building, Cambridge CB2 2RU

FLOAT AWAY AND DISCOVER A WORLD OF DREAMS . . .



Lucy and the Egg Witch

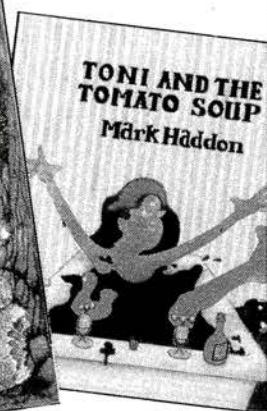
Story idea and illustrations by

Helen Cooper

Text by Moira Miller

0241 12454 9

£7.50



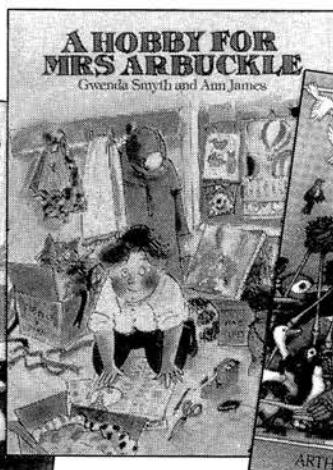
Toni and the Tomato Soup

Written and illustrated by

Mark Haddon

0241 12488 3

£6.95



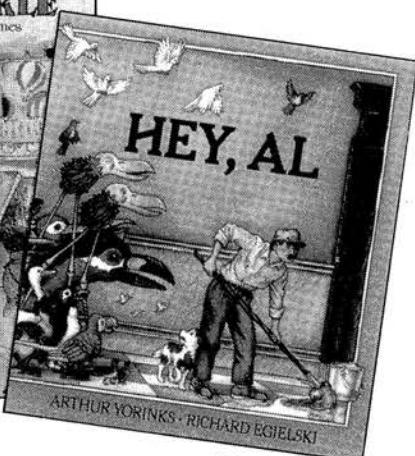
A Hobby for Mrs Arbuckle

Gwenda Smyth and

Ann James

0241 12649 5

£6.95



Hey, Al

Written by Arthur Yorinks

Illustrated by

Richard Egielski

0241 12227 9

£7.95

. . . WITH

HAMISH HAMILTON CHILDREN'S BOOKS

For a complete list of titles write to: Children's Publicity,
Hamish Hamilton Ltd, FREEPOST, 27 Wrights Lane, London W8 5BR



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 6: CELEBRATIONS AND FESTIVALS

Non-fiction books have been divided into three broad groups: festivals associated with particular faiths, family celebrations, and seasonal high jinks, some of which have only tenuous links with their origins. Inevitably, the groups will overlap. The very many books on Christmas are easy to find so this festival is represented briefly by less usual examples. Some good series which cover

festivals from many different cultural origins are signposted and traditional British festivals, some of which are disappearing, have also been included.

INFORMATION BOOKS

Festivals and faiths

Eid-ul-Fitr, Kenneth McLeish, Ginn 1985, one of a set of six books plus teacher's notes, 0 602 22688 0, £11.50 pbk for set. Part of the 'Celebrations' series, this is an account of the 'Festival of the ending of the fast', the last day of Ramadan, in story format with illustrations. Three stories of the Prophet follow, and then the final section uses modern photographs to describe the feast day itself. This arrangement is used with the other titles. **Chinese New Year** tells how a creature is assigned to each year, the middle section gives birthdays and 'horoscopes' and the final section describes the modern festival, again with contemporary photographs. The other titles are **Diwali**, **Christmas**, **Hanukkah** and **Carnival**.

Festival!, Rosalind Kerven, Macmillan Education 1986, £8.95 each. A series of four titles: **Carnival** (0 333 37904 7), **Diwali** (0 333 37903 9), **Chinese New Year** (0 333 37901 2) and **Ramadan and Eid-ul-Fitr** (0 333 37902 0). These consist of teacher's notes and work cards for juniors.

Festival!, Olivia Bennett, Macmillan Education 1986, £3.75 each. A similar series, also with teacher's notes. **Ramadan and Eid-ul-Fitr** (0 333 37898 9) and **Chinese New Year** (0 333 37897 0) have copiable worksheets with suggested activities across the curriculum. **Carnival** (0 333 37900 4) takes us to Trinidad, tells us about the historical background and then describes the build-up to the great event. All its component parts, costume, musical instruments, the calypso, have sections and we finish back in Britain, in Notting Hill. Brief reference is made to other countries which have carnivals.

Faiths and Festivals, Martin Palmer, Ward Lock Educational 1984, 0 7062 4293 9, £7.95. A calendar of festivals across many faiths. A 'When?', 'What happens?' and 'Why?' approach. For older pupils or as a teacher's background book.

The **Living Festivals** series from the Religious and Moral Education Press concentrates on information in a fairly densely presented text. Questions, activities, addresses and further reading lists are appended. All the major festivals are represented, including Christian. As examples:

Guru Nanak's Birthday, Margaret Davidson, RMEP 1982, 0 08 027877 9, £1.60 non-net; 0 08 027878 7, £1.95 net, describes the Guru's youth, the roots of the Sikh religion, dress and customs and the birthday festival itself.

Saraswati Puja, Saresh Ray, RMEP 1985, 0 08 031744 8, £1.60 non-net; 0 08 031745 6, £1.95 net, provides similar information about a Hindu festival.

My Class at Diwali, Ruth Thomson, Watts 1986, 0 86313 425 4, £5.95. From about 5 years. The class builds up to a Diwali assembly and we see the preparations: making diwas, rangoli patterns, shadow pictures, all photographed in a multi-ethnic classroom.

Sweet-Tooth Sunil, Joan Solomon, Hamish Hamilton 1984, 0 241 11201 X, £4.95. The family get ready for Diwali, each playing a part, but little Sunil's attention is concentrated on the sweets. Family photo-story.

Dat's New Year, Linda Smith, A & C Black 1985, 0 7136 2644 5, £4.50. The Chinese New Year for younger children with photographs and short, explanatory captions. The activities photographed would be fun to copy.

Sam's Passover, Lynne Hannigan, A & C Black 1985, 0 7136 2646 1, £4.50. A group of young children visit the synagogue and learn something of the Jewish faith. Then we follow Sam and his family through the preparations for Passover.

Easter, Julian Fox, Wayland 1984, 0 85078 451 4, £5.95. The story of Easter, Holy Week day by day, the significance of eggs and then the secular aspects, plentifully illustrated.

Countdown to Easter, Lesley Cox and Leslie Foster, Macmillan Education 1984, 0 333 30753 4, o/p. The religious background and social customs are covered from Shrovetide. There are activities, including recipes, and chapters on art and music associated with this time. Includes a reference material section. Useful teacher's background book. See also **Countdown to Christmas**, 0 333 29136 0, £5.25.

The Christmas Road, Pamela Egan, Church House Publications 1986, 0 7151 0440 3, £4.50. A different kind of anthology containing many unusual pieces. Real life accounts of the Christmas experience, as well as poems and extracts from fiction. Top juniors.

Welcome to the Family

New Baby, Judith Baskerville, A & C Black 1985, 0 7136 2645 3, £4.50. Judith comes into school so that Iqbal's class can share the anticipation of baby Jenny's arrival. The children work out growth patterns and birth customs according to their different cultures.

Birth Customs, Jon Mayled, Wayland 1986, 0 85078 717 3, £4.95. Appropriate customs and celebrations are described for each of the major religious groupings.

Kikar's Drum, Olivia Bennett, Hamish Hamilton 1986,

0 241 11235 4, £4.95. Kikar wants to play the drum at Pujenay's wedding. While the preparations go on, they celebrate Raksha Bandan, a celebration between brothers and sisters.

A Sikh Wedding, Olivia Bennett, Hamish Hamilton 1985, 0 241 11572 8, £4.95. An account in words and photographs, describing the advance preparations, the roles of the two families, the religious ceremony and the celebrations.

Mazal-Tov: a Jewish Wedding, José Patterson, Hamish Hamilton 1988, 0 241 12269 4, £4.95. Illustrated with photographs to give a celebratory account of the wedding and its preparations.

Let's Celebrate! Seasonal Festivals and Social Custom

Festivals Around the World, Philip Steele, Macmillan Education 1983, 0 333 34550 9, £5.95. Big format picture book, each double spread showing a festival from a different country. They are mostly lesser known events. Brief text.

High Days and Holidays, Margaret Joy, Faber 1981, 0 571 11771 6, £5.95. Brief descriptions of significant days: religious festivals across the world, national days, and special events like the Lord Mayor's Show.

Feasts and Seasons: Summer, Anthony Adams, Blackie 1978, 0 216 90398 X, o/p. Intended for classroom use (9-13), this series takes a broader view, including things like sheep shearing and well dressing. Contemporary texts, songs and poems are included, as well as activities and a teacher's reference section. There are also volumes for **Autumn**, **Spring** and **Winter** but they are also o/p.

Carnival, Ian Menter, Hamish Hamilton 1982, 0 241 10828 4, £4.95. Young picture book which follows two children as they take part in the carnival in St Paul's, Bristol. Bright pictures of the floats, the emphasis on fun and racial harmony.

Gunpowder, Treason and Plot, Lewis Winstock, Wayland 1987 (reissue), 1 85210 598 4, £6.95. November 5th celebrations raise a lot of complex questions. This is a meaty but straightforward historical background which should help the teacher to put what has become a light-hearted festival into context.

Because Christmas is so predominant as a theme, easily identified collections for Christmas have been omitted. Schools Library Services can usually supply lists. Examples which have been included indicate the variety of approach possible. Hallowe'en is represented by pieces that mention the event specifically, not by associated themes such as witches and magic. Again, lists on these themes are usually available and can be used according to the particular ethos of your school.

This time, the fiction is arranged according to the celebration rather than by form.

Alfie Gives a Hand, Shirley Hughes, Bodley Head, 0 370 30521 3, £5.25; Picture Lions, 0 00 662379 4, £1.95 pbk. Birthday parties can be alarming as well as exciting but Alfie finds courage by looking after an even more nervous guest.

Happy Birthday, Sam!, Pat Hutchins, Bodley Head, 0 370 30147 1, £5.95; Picture Puffins, 0 14 050.339 0, £1.95 pbk. Grandpa provides the perfect present for a small boy. About size and growing as well as birthdays.

Mog's Amazing Birthday Caper, Judith Kerr, Collins, 0 00 195557 8, £4.95. Unusual ABC based on alliterative sentences.

Thank You for the Tadpole, Pat Thomson and Mary Rayner, Gollancz, 0 575 04478 0, £1.99 pbk. Dad's ideas for a present seem a little rash but he has a trick up his sleeve. Readers can play the same language game and invent their own birthday presents.

Getting Rich with Jeremy James, D H Wilson, Chatto, 0 7011 2441 5, o/p; Piccolo, 0 330 28383 9, £1.50 pbk. 'Timothy's Birthday Party'. Horribly realistic short story about a children's party. There are also several Christmas stories for knowing infants.

Leaf Magic, Margaret Mahy, Dent, 0 460 06151 8, £6.50; Magnet, 0 416 63780 9, £1.50 pbk. 'The Rare Spotted Birthday Party' – with measly guests.

Uninvited Ghosts, Penelope Lively, Heinemann, 0 434 94960 4, £6.95; Puffins, 0 14 03.1966 2, £1.75 pbk. 'The Great Mushroom Mistake'. Mum's present threatens to take over the house so harsh measures (i.e. Aunt Sadie) are called for. Juniors.

Trouble in the Cupboard, Pat Thomson, Gollancz, 0 575 03976 0, £6.95. 'Birthday Ghost'. Bear's party takes a (gently) ghostly turn.

Hallowe'en, Robin May, Wayland 1986, 0 85078 467 0, £5.95. Hallowe'en has become a difficult issue for some schools. This book, suitable for top juniors, surveys the pre-Christian origins and all the forms of celebration which have subsequently developed, from a strange mixture of fear and hope to today's tricks and fun.

Hallowe'en, All Souls and All Saints, Antony Ewens, RMEP 1983, 0 08 029280 1, £1.60 non-net; 0 08 029281 X, £1.95 net. Hallowe'en is traced from the Celtic festivals to apple bobbing, and describes the Hallowe'en bonfire giving way to November 5th. The Christian 'Hallowtide' is described and All Souls customs remembered.

Shrove Tuesday, Ash Wednesday and Mardi Gras, Margaret Davidson, RMEP 1984, 0 08 029286 0, £1.60 non-net; 0 08 029287 9, £1.95 net. Substantial text and black and white photographs. The events are tied in with the religious year, but the secular aspects are also described.

Mayday, Fay Sampson, RMEP 1985, 0 08 031746 4, £1.60 non-net; 0 08 031747 2, £1.95 net. Much ground is covered: Beltane, May Queens, Maypoles, the Green Man, the Helston Furry Dance and Labour Day. There are helpful suggestions at the back, including where to get your maypole!

And three useful books of a practical nature:

Japan: activities and projects in colour, New York: Sterling 1980, 0 8069 4556 7, o/p. A handy, practical book of things to make to enhance a Japanese festival project.

Christmas Tinderbox, Sue Nichols, A & C Black 1986, 0 7136 5557 7, £6.95. All singing and dancing collection of information, activities, songs and games. Good section on Christmas characters, and the 'light at the darkest time of the year' section brings in Diwali and Hanukkah.

Harlequin, David Gadsby and Beatrice Harrop, A & C Black 1981, 0 7136 2155 9, £5.95 (music edition); 0 7136 2157 5, £1.45 non-net (words edition). A collection of 44 songs, taking us round the year. 'Songs for the seasons, for ordinary days, for high days and festivals.'

FICTION AND POETRY

Noel Streatfeild Summer Holiday Book, Dent, 0 460 05850 9, £7.50. 'Loving and Giving' by Rumer Godden. Worth looking for – an extraordinary account of a Christmas in India under the 'Raj'.

A Problem for Mother Christmas, Ted Willis, Gollancz, 0 575 03884 5, £6.95. Agreeable 'end of term' story about Father Christmas's backroom problems. Junior novel.

Other Seasonal Celebrations

Where's My Easter Egg?, Harriet Ziefert, Picture Puffins, 0 14 050.537 7, £3.50 pbk. Large print picture book with flaps to search under.

The Wizard Party, Thelma Lambert, Hamish Hamilton, 0 241 12136 1, £3.95. Mini novel where a Hallowe'en party goes a little wrong.

Ramona the Pest, Beverly Cleary, Hamish Hamilton, 0 241 02412 9, £5.95; Puffins, 0 14 03.0774 5, £1.95 pbk. 'The Baddest Witch in the World'. Hallowe'en at school. Interesting sidelight on masks and identity as Ramona finds no one recognises her.

Charlie and Elly Stories, Frances Farrer, Gollancz, 0 575 03966 3, £6.95. 'Charlie and Elly's Bonfire Night'. A community bonfire with all the right elements from toffee to rockets. Infants.

The Owl Who was Afraid of the Dark, Jill Tomlinson, Methuen, 0 416 46640 0, £5.95; Young Puffins, 0 14 03.0634 X, £1.75 pbk. 'Dark is Exciting'. Plop comes to terms with his fear by learning about the positive aspects of the dark, including Bonfire Night.

Weddings

Here Comes the Bride, Emil Pacholek, Deutsch, 0 233 97668 X, £4.95. A vignette of the past. Sharply observed wedding game, played by children under the viaduct in 'a time of trams and treacle toffee'. Older juniors.

One Way Only, Gwen Grant, Heinemann, 0 434 94136 0, £6.95; Lions, 0 00 672290 3, £1.95 pbk. 'Can you have a wedding without a bride?' A chapter in this hilarious family saga which must be dedicated to all those girls who did not want to be bridesmaids.

Other Countries and Cultures

Cat's Carnival, Edith Schreiber-Wilke, Methuen, 0 416 61430 2, o/p. Fantasy adventure at the Venice Carnival. A picture book, strong on costume.

The Festival, Peter Bonnici and Lisa Kopper, Bell & Hyman, 0 7135 1458 2, o/p. Arjuna takes an important part in the village festival.

Nanda in India, Terry Furchgott, Deutsch, 0 233 97480 6, £5.95. Nanda rides the elephant in a wonderful Indian procession. Vividly coloured picture book.

Kamla and Kate, Jamila Gavin, Methuen, 0 416 22780 5, £5.95; Magnet, 0 416 50450 7, £1.50 pbk. In 'Kamla and Kate Dress Up' the two little girls join a carnival procession and in 'Kamla's Secret' Kate is invited to share the Diwali celebrations.

Fingers Crossed, Chris Powling, Blackie, 0 216 92113 9, £6.95; Knight, 0 340 48566 3, £1.99 pbk. 'John and the Green Dragon'. Chinese New Year and a dragon arrives to take John to the celebrations.

Chris and the Dragon, Fay Sampson, Gollancz, 0 575 03661 3, £6.95. Chris and Tuan celebrate Christmas and Chinese New Year and poor Mr Downs, their long-suffering teacher, has to put up with it. Lively junior novel.

The Village by the Sea, Anita Desai, Heinemann, 0 434 93436 4, £6.95; Penguin Plus, 0 14 03.2505 0, £1.99 pbk. Really a story of Indian family and village life but the moving ending is a description of Diwali and then the Hindu New Year, made even more special by a homecoming.

The Hostages, Michael Smith, Hodder, 0 340 41321 2, £7.95. White children are held hostage by freedom fighters in the Sudan. A Dinka ceremony, in which the white boy participates, brings the two cultures together in increased understanding. Top juniors.

There are two books which offer several possibilities:

You're in the Juniors Now, Margaret Joy, Faber, 0 571 15008 X, £6.95. Seasonal stories, such as 'Hallowe'en' and 'Easter' which follow the school year. Early junior years context.

Family Gathering, Pat Thomson, Dent, 0 460 06268 9, £8.50. Many special family occasions are celebrations and this anthology contains 'My Birthday' by Laurie Lee; 'Gloves in High Summer', a touching story of a foster child's birthday by Janet Hitchman; 'Christmas' in Laura Ingall Wilder's warm pioneer family setting; and 'The Christening', D H Wilson's shocking story of a fight at the font.

Poetry

Seeing and Doing: a new anthology of songs and poems, Rosalind

Farrimond, Thames/Methuen, 0 423 00660 6, £3.95 pbk. Whole section on festivals.

A Very First Poetry Book, John Foster, Oxford, 0 19 916051 1, £5.95; 0 19 916050 3, £2.95 non-net pbk. 'Happy Birthday Card' by Tony Robinson. Also poems suitable for Hallowe'en.

Poems for Nine Year Olds and Under, Kit Wright, Viking Kestrel, 0 670 82677 4, £6.95; Puffins, 0 14 03.1490 3, £2.50 pbk. 'A Party' by Laura E Richards.

The Puffin Book of Magic Verse, Charles Causley, Puffins, 0 14 03.0660 9, £2.50 pbk. 'Hallowe'en' by Leonard Clark. Many witch poems, too.

Once Upon a Rhyme, Sara and Stephen Corrin, Faber, 0 571 11913 1, £5.95; Puffins, 0 14 03.1639 6, £2.25 pbk. 'Fireworks' by James Reeves and 'November 5th' by Leonard Clark.

Poets in Hand, Anne Harvey, Puffins, 0 14 03.1818 6, £2.95 pbk. 'November Story' by Vernon Scannell.

The Sun, Dancing, Charles Causley, Puffins, 0 14 03.1575 6, £3.50 pbk. A section on Easter poems, some having complex religious implications but others, such as the Russian 'Easter Eggs', are bravely simple.

Poems for Seven Year Olds and Under, Helen Nicoll, Viking Kestrel, 0 670 80757 5, £6.95; Puffins, 0 14 03.1489 X, £2.50 pbk. 'Shrove Tuesday, Ash Wednesday', anon., and 'In Marble Halls', anon.

Song of the City, Gareth Owen, Collins, 0 00 184846 1, £4.95; Lions, 0 00 672410 8, £1.95 pbk. 'Christmas Morning' and 'Christmas at Our House'.

Magic Mirror, Judith Nicholls, Faber, 0 571 13696 6, £2.95 pbk. 'Stable Song'.

The Jungle Sale, June Crebbin, Viking Kestrel, 0 670 82195 0, £5.95. 'The School Carol'.

Golden Apples, Fiona Waters, Heinemann, 0 434 97163 4, £7.95; Piper, 0 330 29728 7, £2.50 pbk. 'A Peculiar Christmas' by Roy Fuller.

The Kingfisher Book of Comic Verse, Roger McGough, Kingfisher, 0 86272 217 9, £7.95. 'Christmas Thank You' by Mick Gowar.

I Din Do Nuttin, John Agard, Magnet, 0 416 49760 8, £1.75 pbk. 'All Fool's Bay'.

Every Colour Under the Sun, n.a., Ward Lock Educational, 0 7062 4266 1, £7.95. 'Village Festival' (Japanese song).

Third Time Lucky, Mick Gowar, Viking Kestrel, 0 670 81492 X, £5.95. Perhaps this one should be read first. 'Seasons Greetings' contains the child's complaint 'Any old excuse is time to draw another card'. Of course, we weren't going to, were we?

USEFUL ADDRESSES

First call should be on local multi-cultural associations and religious groups. They are often willing to provide the best resource of all - people. Check with your Adviser for contacts and addresses.

Many embassies and commissions, as well as associated Tourist Offices, offer materials and information. See your **Teacher's Treasure Chest** for addresses, e.g.

Office of the High Commission for Ghana

13 Belgrave Square
London
SW1X 8PR
(Posters, pamphlets, films)

British Tourist Authority

64 St James Street
London
SW1A 1NF
(Info.)

Commonwealth Institute

Kensington High Street
London
W8 6NQ
(Booklists, music)

English Folk Dance & Song Society

Cecil Sharp House
2 Regents Park Road
London
NW1 7AY
(Pub. list)

Folklore Society

c/o University College
Gower Street
London
WC1E 6ST
(Booklist)

Hindu Centre

39 Grafton Terrace
London
NW5 4JA
(Info. service)

Islamic Cultural Centre

146 Park Road
London
NW8 7RG
(Info. service)

Jewish Education Bureau

8 Westcombe Avenue
Leeds
LS8 2BS
(Info., booklist)

National Society for Promoting Religious Education

Church House
Dean's Yard
London SW1
(Booklist)

Oxfam Education Department

274 Banbury Road
Oxford
OX2 7DZ
(Free catalogue of schools material)

There is also a comprehensive guide to organisations and their addresses in the **BfK Guides to Children's Books for a Multi-cultural Society** (now both out of print).

The last theme to be covered in the series will be **Minibeasts** in the July issue. Previous themes: **House and Home** (July 88); **Water** (September 88); **Clothing** (November 88); **Food** (January 89); and **The Senses** (March 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.



ISBN: 1 871566 00 2

Price £5.50

A major bibliographical resource for teachers and librarians.

For complete details write or phone now.

Books for Keeps, Sales Dept., 1 Effingham Road, Lee,
London SE12 8NZ (tel: 01-852 4953).

Piccadilly Press

Picture Books for Keeps



Superbabe II

Deborah van der Beek

1-85340-020-3 May £5.95

And Many More



P

l

u



P

l

u



A PLUS from the Puffin Book Club...

...or how to keep young teenagers reading for pleasure!

By popular demand, the Puffin Book Club has expanded to offer a new, exciting, termly list of books for the young teenager. **PLUS** is a carefully selected list of twelve titles – both fiction and non-fiction – which will enable pupils to widen their reading experiences and build up their own collection of books which *they* have chosen. The school or class benefits too, as for every 10 books bought it will get one free!

Return the reply paid slip below to start using PLUS in your school.

Please send me _____ PLUS leaflets (one for each pupil).
I would also like further information about the Puffin Book Club

Name _____ SCHOOL _____

Address _____

Return to Puffin Book Club, Freepost Penguin, 27 Wright's Lane,
London W8 5TZ



P

l

u



P

l

u



NEWS

PUBLISHING & PUBLICATIONS

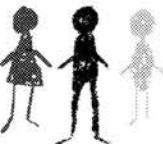
FACES CLOSURE

Dragon's Teeth, the magazine of the National Committee on Racism in Children's Books, has lost its funding from the London Borough Grants Scheme (LBGS) and cannot survive without it. LBGS have told **Dragon's Teeth**: '... your project, which is not a frontline agency, is no longer considered a funding priority.' With something like £27m at its disposal, LBGS gave little or no warning of this decision and no interim period for **Dragon's Teeth** to search out alternatives. At the time of writing there's an appeal going in but with not a lot of hope behind it. If they do go down, **Dragon's Teeth** will publish their last issue some time in June. Whilst it has a smallish circulation (about the size of **BBN Children's Books** - with which BfK merged last year) **Dragon's Teeth** has been an influential and radical voice on behalf of anti-racism and anti-sexism in children's books for the last ten years and its loss is to be deplored.

If you'd like to help, write or phone Pascoe Sawyers, NCRCB, 5 Cornwall Crescent, The Basement Office, London W11 1PH; tel: 01-221 1353.

WORKING WITH SEXUALLY ABUSED CHILDREN:

A resource pack for professionals



Khadji Rouf and Anne Peake (foreword by Lord Justice Butler-Sloss), The Children's Society, Edward Rudolf House, Margery Street, London WC1X 0JL; tel: 01-837 4299.

A pack containing two story books, a colouring book, and a series of practice papers for professionals in social work, health and education who work with children known or thought to be abused. For an explanatory leaflet/order form, write or phone the Publications Editor at the above address.

TWO NEW PAPERBACK IMPRINTS —



Orchard Books have announced the launch of a new paperback series called **Orchard Originals**. The first batch of five books, all priced at £4.95 and for older readers, include Paula Fox and Rose Impey titles.

For more details write to: Orchard Books, 12a Golden Square, London W1R 3AF.

Yearling from Transworld

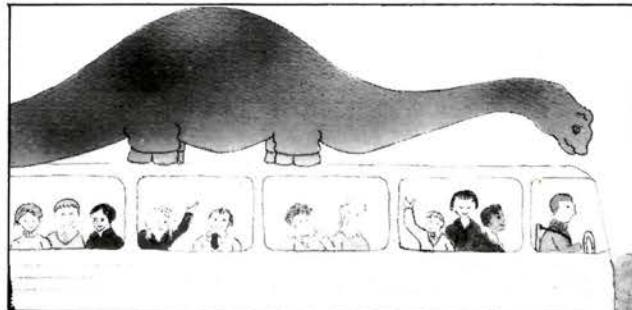
With a launch coming in June, Transworld have announced



For further information contact: Children's Publicity Department, Transworld Publishers Ltd, 61/63 Uxbridge Road, London, W5 5SA; tel: 01-579 2652.

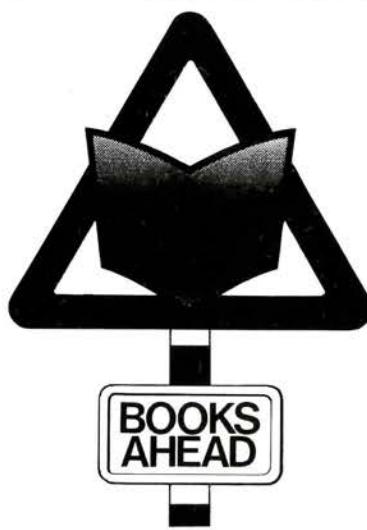
Watch our review pages from September on.

Desmond is Back!



Desmond, as in Dinosaur and Althea, has just been relaunched (in March) by Learning Development Aids, the Cambridge-based publisher of educational materials for special needs. They have even created a new trade imprint for him called Bridge Street Books, kicking off with two new titles (one of which is a collection of short stories chosen from the many hundreds sent in to Althea by Desmond's young fans) and the reissue of four of his most popular out-of-print adventures (**Desmond Starts School**, **Desmond and the Monsters**, **Desmond at the Zoo** and **Desmond and the Fancy Dress Party**). As part of the razzmatazz, Althea is willing to visit schools, libraries and bookshops, possibly in the company of a ten-foot high Desmond the Dinosaur costume providing some willing victim can be pressganged. If you can't get Althea herself, the costume is available for hire to anybody organising their own mini-event.

Contact Amanda Clarke at LDA on 0223 357744 for details.



— a new author video from The Greenwich Bookbus

A 16-minute video featuring John Agard, Bernard Ashley, Anthony Browne and Pat Hutchins, four very different writers covering a wide age range, talking about their books and how they work. Originally conceived by Bob Cattell, of Greenwich Bookboat and Bookbus fame, as an aid or a sort of preview for primary schools preparing for an author visit (of which the Boat and the Bus have amassed huge experience over the years), it turns out to be a quite superb author video in its own right. High professional production values and good editing (essential for today's sophisticated child TV viewers) make for an excellent 'taster' of these four particular writers in action. It would be fascinating to see what the Cattell team might come up with if they concentrated on one author and omitted the 'preparing for a school visit' emphasis.

The video (and accompanying booklet) costs £7.50 (it is not for hire) and is available from Bob Cattell, The Greenwich Bookbus Company, P O Box 347, Cutty Sark Gardens, Greenwich, London SE10 9DB; tel: 01-853 4383.

Books for Keeps

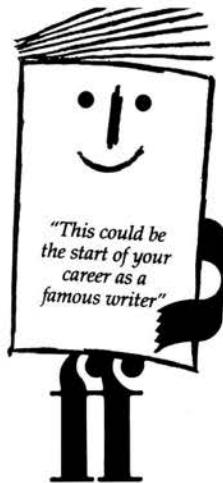
NEWS

COMPETITIONS

Quest for a Kelpie

Canongate Publishing Ltd., BBC Scotland and the Scottish Libraries Association have once again combined forces to find and encourage new children's authors in Scotland. The winning story will be published in the Canongate Kelpie Series and serialised by BBC Radio Scotland. The winning author, who must either be born or resident in Scotland, will receive a £1000 advance on royalties. Closing date for entries is 1st September 1989.

For more details write or phone: Joanne Small, Canongate Publishing Ltd., 17 Jeffrey Street, Edinburgh EH1 1DR; tel: 031 557 5888.



Faber and Faber Write-A-Story Competition

For 12 years and under, with the best stories being published in an anthology in 1990. Chairing the panel of judges will be the Poet Laureate, Ted Hughes. Children can choose whether or not to accompany their stories (not to be longer than 1500 words) with their own illustrations. Winners, besides being published, will receive a £25 Book Token and be invited to help promote the book, attending parties and meeting the press. The closing date is 31st July 1989; winners to be notified in October. To enter children need to send in their story together with details of their name, age and address to: The Faber and Faber Write-A-Story Competition, 3 Queen Square, London WC1N 3AU.

AWARDS

M Macmillan Prize 1989

The Macmillan Prize, now in its fourth year, is a unique award open exclusively to art students with the to be applauded intention of encouraging and introducing new talent into children's book illustration. This year's jury comprises the elite of established British children's book illustrators (Raymond Briggs, Tony Ross, Michael Foreman, Shirley Hughes) who were unanimous in their decision:

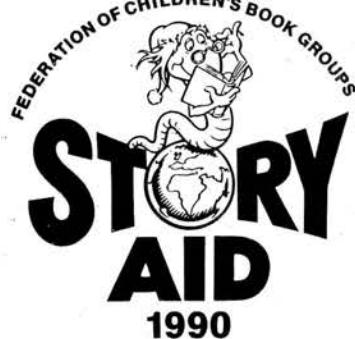
First Prize (£500) – Amanda Harvey, from Chelsea School of Art, for her work, 'A Close Call'.

Second Prize (£300) – Simon Buckingham, also from Chelsea School of Art, for his work, 'The Amazing Flying Bed'.

Third Prize (£100) – jointly given to Emma Phillips from Bristol Polytechnic for 'The Last Tree on the Whole Earth', and to Patrick Yee from Camberwell School of Art and Crafts for 'The Adventures of Cha Cha'.

None of the work for which prizes have been awarded is or necessarily will be published.

ADDENDUM



Following the logic of the Federation's original and continuing mission of encouraging story telling and story reading, the more specifically focused National-Tell-a-Story Week (conceived originally by Pat Triggs) and the recent fund-raising trend inspired by the likes of Band Aid, Live Aid, Sports Aid and Comic Relief (and noting the fact that 1990 has been designated International Literacy Year), the FCBG have announced their initial thoughts concerning an ambitious project called **Story Aid 1990**. Whilst fund-raising over the last few years has concentrated (out of catastrophic necessity) on disasters and relief efforts, in the run-up to the 21st century it is not enough to provide sustenance and protection for the body only. Mind and soul are just as important. Competitions, publications and a variety of activities are planned – some definite, some still on the drawing board. Monies raised will be divided equally among educational projects of Save the Children Fund, UNESCO'S 'Books for All Project', and the FCBG itself.

For further information contact: Thelma Simpson, FCBG, 34 Hopetoun Place, Kirkcaldy KY2 6TY.

Scholastic Book Fairs

In the March issue we carried a short piece on the News Page about Scholastic's new book fairs service which at the time we understood to be called **Great British Book Fairs**. Evidently it is to be known simply as **Scholastic Book Fairs** because the

company is well known anyway for both its book and magazine publishing. Also, just in case there was any confusion, there is no connection between **Scholastic Book Fairs** and the Dorset based company **School Book Fairs Ltd.**

For further details the contact is: Chris Day on 092681 7300.

CHILDREN'S BOOK OF THE YEAR AWARD 1989

Organised by Lancashire County Library and sponsored by the National Westminster Bank, this award for fiction for 11-14 year olds, chosen by children themselves, has just published its shortlist from which the eventual winner will be chosen and then announced in July 1989:

- Children of the Camps**, Clare Cooper, Hodder, 0 340 41364 6, £7.95
 - The Thorn Key**, Louise Cooper, Orchard, 1 85213 132 2, £7.95
 - The Empty Sleeve**, Leon Garfield, Viking Kestrel, 0 670 80118 6, £7.95
 - Quake**, Michael Hardcastle, Faber, 0 571 14698 8, £6.95
 - Master of Fiends**, Douglas Hill, Gollancz, 0 575 04095 5, £7.95
 - The Edge of War**, Dorothy Horgan, Oxford, 0 19 271574 7, £6.95
 - Grosham Grange**, Anthony Horowitz, Methuen, 0 416 02462 9, £7.50
 - The Mole and Beverley Miller**, Allan Frewin Jones, Hodder, 0 340 41320 4, £6.95
 - Red Sky in the Morning**, Elizabeth Laird, Heinemann, 0 434 94714 8, £7.95
 - Stan**, Ann Pilling, Viking Kestrel, 0 670 81770 8, £6.95
- Further details from: Tracey Hollins on 0253 729943/4

NEWS

BOOKS FOR KEEPS

1989 Guardian Children's Fiction Award

STEPHANIE NETTELL REPORTS

MCC Berkshire springs from nowhere (he says he comes from Reading, but significantly mispronounces it), charming Ailsa and her mother into allowing him to live in their antiques shop and their customers into buying their junk, and all with a virtuoso performance of stories – twelve of them, marvellous pastiches of different genres, horror, romance, farce, detection, tragedy, against which the real world seems powerless.

Reading Geraldine McCaughrean's *A Pack of Lies* is like playing Pass the Parcel. Each story peels away to reveal another one, the storyteller, MCC, not only casting a spell over his fellow characters but enchanting his own creator into joining them in the happy-ever-after world of his own fiction. It is an unembarrassed vindication of all escapism.

In an intriguing puzzle-ending, Ailsa and her mother realise what must be happening – that neither MCC nor they themselves can be real – so MCC's creator, a young man who escapes his pathetic, sickly self by writing, decides it is time to stop his characters getting out of hand. And then, in a marvellous last twist, he changes his mind, abandons the real world and joins them in theirs. This ending – which I really ought not to be revealing, except that it is the essence of any description of the book – might have been spelt out a little more for younger readers (and two of the judges!) who have been swept along till then by the fun and entertainment of the stories, but for teens it will be a neat surprise to tease out.

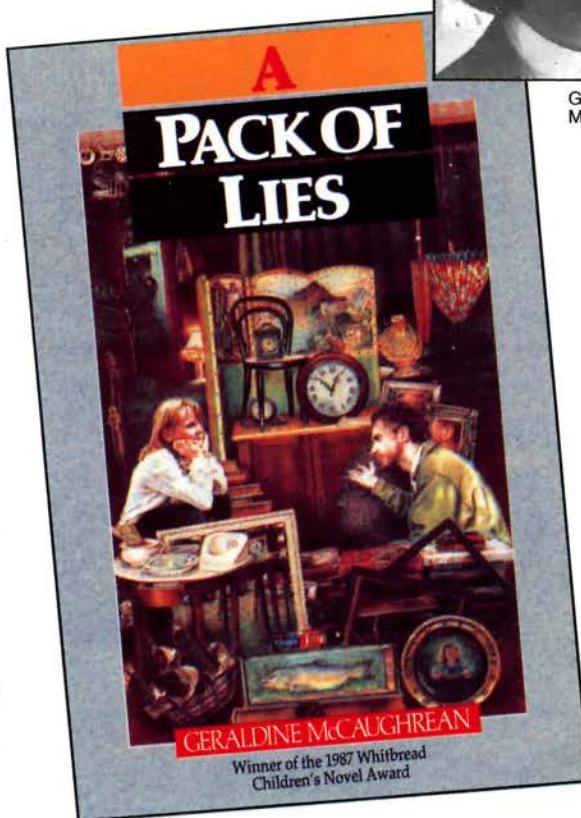
More than anything, *A Pack of Lies* is an exuberant celebration of fiction's spell, a smiling surrender to the grip of the unruly imagination, a playful introduction to the riches of style that lie waiting in books. Itself a tribute to the sheer power of story, it must be the ideal recipient of a children's fiction award.

Our runner-up, *Josie Smith*, by Magdalen Nabb, vivaciously illustrated by Pirkko Vainio, is one of the youngest ever finalists for the Guardian Award. Try as they might, judges of literary prizes are almost always compelled to choose the older novels that naturally encompass more complex issues and more subtle emotions. But here is a reading-aloud book that tackles all sorts of important feelings in a small child's life in a style that combines pure simplicity with liveliness and rare skill.

In three stories, Josie, a sturdily independent rising-six, struggles against the odds to buy her mum a birthday present, hates her best friend, makes such a mess she reckons she'd better run away to her gran, and falls in love with a cat. The humour, the everyday detail, the spot-on truth of the conver-



Geraldine McCaughrean.



sations, will appeal to older independent readers, while the skilful repetitions and cadences, the only too recognisable feelings and events, will capture young listeners.

The judges for the Guardian Award must be themselves writers for children, and this year they were Douglas Hill, Dick King-Smith, Ann Pilling and Ann Schlee, with me, as children's books editor, in the chair.

A Pack of Lies, Geraldine McCaughrean, Oxford, 0 19 271612 3, £7.95

Josie Smith, Magdalen Nabb, ill. Pirkko Vainio, Collins, 0 00 190005 6, £4.95

Ms Wiz Spells Trouble, Terence Blacker, Piccadilly, 1 85340 022 X, £5.25

Matilda, Roald Dahl, ill. Quentin Blake, Cape, 0 224 02572 4, £8.50

The Monster Garden, Vivien Alcock, Methuen, 0 416 09192 X, £7.95

Red Sky in the Morning, Elizabeth Laird, Heinemann, 0 434 94714 8, £7.95

The winner, announced on 1st May at the award ceremony in York, was **Matilda** by Roald Dahl and Quentin Blake.

The Children's Book Award 1988



Like the Lancashire County Library Award, this award from the Federation of Children's Book Groups has the distinctive quality of involving children as judges, but its catchment is far wider and broader. This year's award, the ninth, involved 3680 children from all over the UK, reading, testing and assessing books. A shortlist of six titles was announced at the Federation's Annual Conference in Brighton earlier this year:

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

Dr Xargle's Book of Earthlets, Jeanne Willis, ill. Tony Ross, Andersen, 0 86264 213 2, £5.95

Commendation in the Graphics Prize at Bologna Book Fair

Lucy Cousins was awarded a commendation in the Graphics Prize for her illustrations in **Portly's Hat** which was also a runner-up in the 1987 Macmillan Prize for a Children's Picture Book (0 333 46692 6, £2.95). ■

New for Spring

PICTURE BOOKS from CANONGATE



T is for teapot, tiger, tattoo
and

Taikan's Alphabet

Jeanne Jaffares

An extraordinary alphabet-book!

Original, imaginative and fun with a host of colourful, curious definitions from around the world.

All royalties and profits to:
SAVE THE CHILDREN FUND

£6.95



Available July 1989

The first step for young readers
CANONGATE PUBLISHING

All orders to: Phaidon Press, Unit 2B, Ridgeway Trading Estate, Ivor, Bucks SL0 9JP.

L is for

Little Bunny Adventures

Ulf Nilsson

Illustrated by Eva Eriksson

A mischievous little character always wandering off alone. **Little Bunny** soon learns that independence can be fun, but it's nice to be looked after too.

Four entertaining and educational books for young children.

Little Bunny and Her Friends

Little Bunny Gets Lost

Little Bunny at the Beach

Little Bunny and the Hungry Fox

£3.50 each



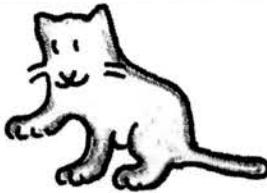
£3.50 each

The first step for young readers

CANONGATE PUBLISHING



SAY YES TO GOLLANCZ PICTURE BOOKS



THE BABY BLUE CAT WHO SAID NO

Ainslie Pryor

Our naughty kitten returns to make more mischief in this follow-up to *The Baby Blue Cat and the Dirty Dog Brothers*.

£6.95 0 575 04470 5 Hbk

Gollancz Children's Paperbacks

ARCHIE'S ACROBATS

Chris Winn

An original and hilarious story about Archie and his team of beginner acrobats, and their efforts to earn a place in Pelderfettle's World Famous Circus.

£2.99 0 575 04481 0 Pbk

ODETTE

Kay Fender

Illustrated by Philippe Dumas

An old man rescues a baby bird and they enjoy a wonderful spring together in Paris. But winter arrives and Odette must fly away to a warmer country...

£2.99 0 575 04534 5 Pbk



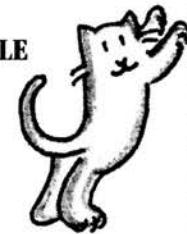
SHARE-A-STORY with Pat Thomson

Designed to be read aloud together, each book is an engaging dialogue between adult and child.
Illustrated by top artists.

THANK YOU FOR THE TADPOLE

Illustrated by Mary Rayner

£1.99 0 575 04478 0 Pbk



MY FRIEND MR MORRIS

Illustrated by Satoshi Kitamura

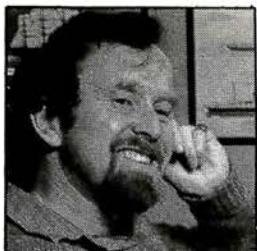
£1.99 0 575 04479 9 Pbk **GOOD GIRL GRANNY**

Illustrated by Faith Jaques

£1.99 0 575 04480 2 Pbk



Gollancz



Rise, Shine . . . it's picture book time.

Chris Powling takes his pick from the Spring lists

Every year I vow I won't be surprised. Zing and zip, who needs it? Greenery-yallery, what again? This time I'll be cool, detached, objective . . . and each Spring, I forget. Mind you, the books don't help. Like Spring itself, they refuse to advance and merely be recognised — they have a first-ever, hot-off-the-press, ink-barely-dry feel about them.

And they know at once when they've been picked up by a sucker. So here, for what it's worth, is an appraisal that's nothing like the beady-eyed lit-crit exercise I always intend. As usual, it's offered more in the spirit of Mole sniffing the air, intoxicated by his first encounter with Ratty . . .

The Lamb and the Butterfly

Arnold Sundgaard and Eric Carle, Hodder & Stoughton, 0 340 49580, £6.95

A book so traditional in its feel and format that it's easy to overlook the fact that Eric Carle himself invented this particular tradition: a combination of acrylic painting and collage that eerily mimics Child Art at a more sophisticated level. The pictures suit the story perfectly and the story seems custom-built for the pictures — a mutual rap between a stay-at-home lamb and a flyaway butterfly in which the pep and rhythm of Arnold Sundgaard's text threatens to break into rhyme at any moment.

We're Going on a Bear Hunt

Michael Rosen and Helen Oxenbury, Walker, 0 7445 1135 6, £8.95



Tradition again, but so freshly interpreted by both author and illustrator it's as if we're encountering it for the first time. Mike Rosen's words belong to Everykid as do Helen Oxenbury's pictures — the epic made domestic as Dad plus Offspring find the bear they're looking for and have to make a snappy, Goldilocksian tactical retreat. Line drawings alternate with full-colour spreads in a layout that shows the Walker design department as its brilliant best.

Ernest and Celestine at the Circus

Gabrielle Vincent, Julia MacRae, 0 86203 388 8, £6.95

Two old favourites in such good form they give favouritism a good name. What is it that makes this grumpy, lumpy bear and moody little mouse-ette so exquisite? Well, Gabrielle Vincent's way with line-and-wash for a start — here prompting her odd couple into professional clowning as the circus hits town and E and C hit the circus. The pictures are so deft, so understated, they might have been done on the back of an envelope. Some envelope.

Knickerless Nicola

Kara May and Doffy Weir, Macmillan, 0 333 47576 3, £5.95



As aptly named an illustrator as you're likely to find since Doffy Weir's heroine is much given to just that — doffing her knickers at every opportunity. Kara May's splendidly un-twee storyline, with splendidly un-twee pictures to match, contains a glorious joke and a curious omission. The former is Mum's Worst Moment which comes, hilariously, when Nicola decides to go straight (and knickered) in future. The latter is the lack of reference to any little-boy-ish interest in her cavortings. Or aren't they envisaged as amongst the book's readership?

Hasn't He Grown?

John Talbot, Andersen, 0 86264 232 9, £5.95

Distinctive draughtsmanship and distinctive humour from an illustrator who seems to be doing a bit of growing himself — in his professional stature, that is. In each spread the picture parodies the text with a deadly eye for the clichés of parental conversation. Two Mums gossip about their youngsters who are depicted acting out every remark with remorselessly literal drollness as when 'he's practically eating us out of house and home' captions a double-spread of a much-munched dwelling. The idea is simple enough, but followed through with a wit and inventiveness that suggests *Don't Go Near the Water, Shirley* in reverse. Only Birmingham, in fact, could match it . . .

The Park in the Dark

Martin Waddell and Barbara Firth, Walker, 0 7445 0716 2, £6.95

. . . or Barbara Firth, perhaps, when she's teamed with Martin Waddell. Remember *Can't You Sleep Little Bear*? Who could forget it? As one of the best picture books of 1988, it became at once an almost Impossible Act to Follow in 1989 even by this hugely talented pair. So let it be said at the outset that this book isn't of the same quality . . . in my view it's even better. Mind you, it's unlikely to be as popular. The softness at the centre of Little Bear guaranteed a warm response. Here both words and pictures have a toughness, an originality, that's much harder to take to but, once absorbed have a resonance and power that's even harder to shake off.

As with Little Bear, the theme is both simple and archetypal: fear of the dark. Now, though, there are no caves and cosiness to muffle the confrontation — Me and Loopy and Little Gee, the heroes, are no mere bedtime cuddlies but take on the role of conquistadores of the night when they strike out for the Park, their Eldorado. Of course, they're well aware of the risk involved:

'There might be
Moon witches
or man-eating trees
or withers that wobble
or old Scrawny Shins'

or hairy hobgoblins
or black boggart's knees
in the trees,
or things we can't see
me and Loopy
and Little Gee
all three.'

So there's a dreadful inevitability about the arrival of the THING as it interrupts the whoopee they're making on the swings and slides. No wonder they flee lickety-split 'back where we've come from:

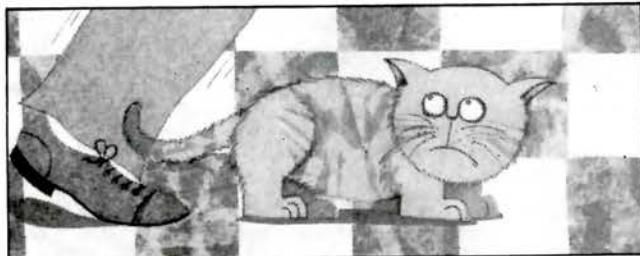
Up to the house
to the stair,
to the bed
where we ought to be
me and Loopy
and Little Gee
safe as can be
all three.'



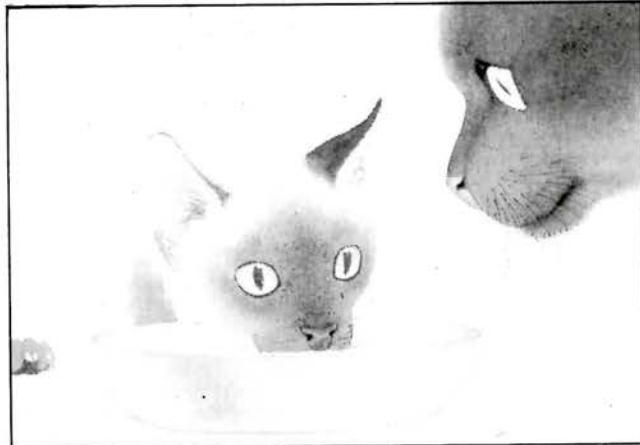
Each step of the adventure is followed by Barbara Firth as if the Disney studios at their best were alive and well and operating from her drawing-board. Every close-up, long or middle shot is totally assured in style, fully convincing in the world-of-its-own it creates, and – best of all – completely accessible to any child who cares to encounter it. Her characters, too, are a triumph. There's nothing pretty about them. They're no more glamourised than Laurel and Hardy or The Keystone Cops. *Anyone* can be as attractive as they are which is precisely the point. The Me who accompanies Loopy and Little Gee could be *this* me, the reader. It's *our* adventure into the Park in the Dark that's being plotted by Martin Waddell's muscular, sing-song prose – not so much a quest for enlightenment (painful enough) but the lure of endarkenment, the Unknown. Like the cuddlies, we too would probably end up in a panic-stricken skitter back home hotly pursued by our own horrible imaginings.

Altogether, from its structure as the implied dream of the little girl in bed to particular details like the number of the house – 31 – clearly seen not just from the hallway but in the day-time and night-time exterior views given by the endpapers, everything in the book is consistent, everything works a treat. And I defy anyone to tackle the text without submitting to its sheer speakability, its demand to be read aloud.

Now, and I mean it in the nicest possible way, for a litter of cats . . .



Go Away, William, Margaret Carter and Carol Wright, Methuen, 0 416 08312 9, £4.95



Tigger and Friends, Dennis Hamley and Meg Rutherford, Deutsch, 0 233 98213 2, £5.95

The Weather Cat, Helen Cresswell and Barbara Walker, Collins, 0 00 197787 3, £3.95

Sid the Kitten, Mark Foreman, Andersen, 0 86264 218 3, £5.95

I Want a Cat, Tony Ross, Andersen, 0 86264 237 X, £5.95

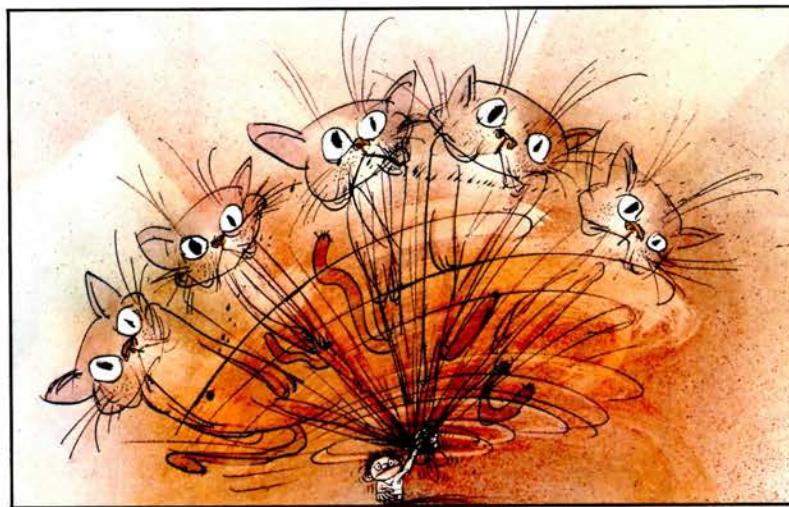
No Room to Swing a Cat, Ralph Steadman, Andersen, 0 86264 241 8, £5.95

Cats are a safe bet for picture books. They're good to look at, tend to walk on the wild side of domesticity and just about everybody wants one, has one or lives next door to one. Which also means they're

pretty well documented, so new offerings had better be extra special. This batch is distinctly above paw. For the youngest child, Margaret Carter's **Go Away, William** explores the theme of the ever-present mog and the upset he can cause – in this case amusingly reported by Carol Wright's charmingly simple illustrations plus some not-so-simple shifts in the text's typography. Dennis Hamley's **Tigger and Friends** looks at rivalry at its most feline, thanks to Meg Rutherford's wonderfully strokable pictures, but with sibling squabbles hinted at, too. And bless Barbara Walker for bringing a multi-cultural dimension to Helen Cresswell's **The Weather Cat**, gently nudging a familiar plot into less readily familiar territory.

Mark Foreman's **Sid the Kitten** is more ambitious – a seafaring kitten, no less, with a wooden leg in store for him if he sustains encounters as epic as these. The text is lively and unpretentious, but it's the pictures we'll remember: dingy alleyways, the shadowy city waterfront, nastily snout-ish rats and the sort of Sid you'd have to cuddle very carefully indeed. There's a hint of Foreman Pére in the broad sweep yet delicate touch evident here, but also enough energy, and originality, to make this a splendid and hugely promising debut for Foreman Fils.

In **I Want a Cat**, Tony Ross settles squarely for being Tony Ross and who will argue with that? Jessy, ragamuffin Ross-ish, wants a cat – oh, how she wants a cat – but when she gets one the sting is in the tale, rather than the tail. It's a good joke but what counts, as always, is the way Tony Ross tells it . . . which applies equally to Ralph Steadman's **No Room to Swing a Cat**. Steadman's punchline, when it finally comes, is all the more hilarious for the brilliantly stylish build-up of improbability after improbability signalled from the very first spread. Should the National Curriculum require infants to understand the word 'bathos' then teachers need look no further. A lot will be learned as well about how a sparse text, augmented with the most eloquent yet economical of drawings, can lead to an explosion of laughter – in short, the art of the cartoon at its very best. But if we expect any self-respecting Secretary of State to promote an appreciation of *that* as an Attainment Target we'd better not hold our breath.



From **No Room to Swing a Cat**.

As a symbol of Spring, cats and kittens a-frolic are hardly unexpected. But how about arks? To have three on offer at once, with or without Noah, looks less like carelessness than Inside Information. What do publishers know about the coming Summer that we don't?



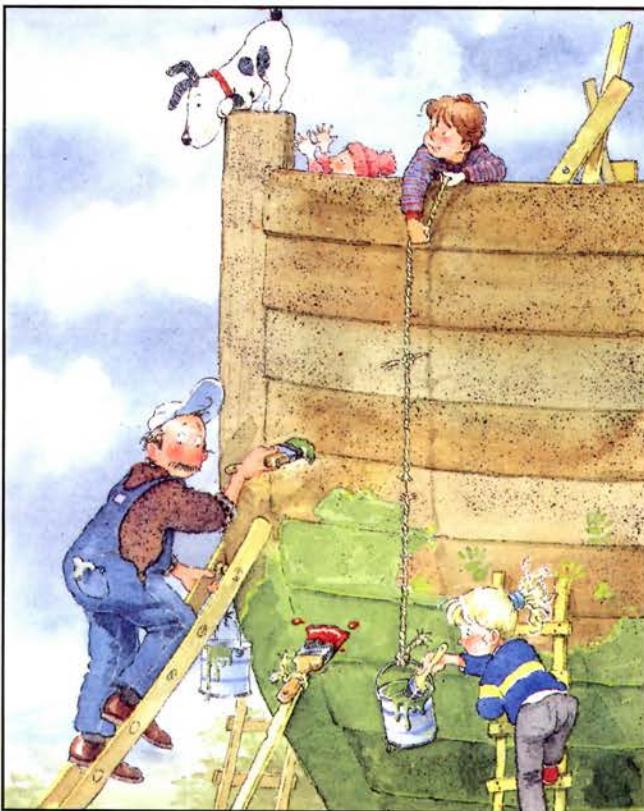
From **Noah Built an Ark One Day**.

Noah Built an Ark One Day, Colin and Jacqui Hawkins, Methuen, 0 416 09412 0, £5.95

Norman's Ark, Brian Pilkington, Heinemann, 0 434 95724 0, £5.95

Rise, Shine!, Fiona French, Methuen, 0 416 08122 3, £5.95

Between them the Hawkenses and Pilkington span the primary age-range. **Noah Built an Ark One Day** comes at the infant end as a rumbustious comic-between-hard-covers with extra lift-the-flap appeal since readers are invited to guess who's embarking next then check for themselves. Brian Pilkington's **Norman's Ark** updates the story while dryly diminishing its epic scale: the flood's not up to expectations and the vessel is converted into a High Street pet shop – bathos for the juniors, this time? What both books exude is amiability, accessibility and the firm conviction that a good story is susceptible to infinite variation and umpteen re-tellings.



From **Norman's Ark**.

Rise, Shine!, has a further dimension. Taking the words of a traditional spiritual as her text, Fiona French enlarges rather than diminishes. When they approach the Heavenly Gates in the best double-spread in the book, the Children of Her Lord are seen to be representative of humanity at large – Sikhs, Buddhists, Muslims, Christians and all, as well as the Jews of the original story. The *best* double-spread, did I say? Well, maybe the second-best. Just before it comes:

'The animals, the animals
They came out by threesie-threesie
Seems they'd heard about the birds and beesy-beesy
Children of the Lord.'

You don't have to be Fiona French to make the most of that. But it helps if you are.

Amoko and Efua Bear

Sonia Appiah and Carol Easmon, Deutsch, 0 233 98301 5, £5.50



A Ghanaian **Dogger**, this. Lost cuddlies are clearly a world-wide phenomenon. The stately formality of Sonia Appiah's prose is caught marvellously by Carol Easmon's lushly statuesque pictures which manage to suggest a context eye-opening exotic for British readers yet wholly, if brightly, everyday for the participants. You don't have to be black to identify with young Amoko Efua Mould and you don't have to be white to envy her.

Tenrec's Twigs

Bert Kitchen, Lutterworth, 0 7188 2716 3, £6.95

Also pretty exotic. Bert Kitchen's first attempt to provide his sharply observed pictures of lesser-known creatures with a narrative link . . . at least, I assume they're sharply observed. Since he includes creatures like the pangolin, the golden mole, the marabou stork and the milky eagle owl, how would I know? His main character, the Streaked Tenrec, I'd never even heard of. Still, it's a pleasure to meet him amongst others, even if the story – which concerns the reassurance he seeks about his obsessive twig building – does end as a bit of a tease. What is it he's trying to construct? Children, I suspect, will need to know.

Katie's Picture Show

James Mayhew, Orchard, 0 85213 130 6, £6.95



Katie's trip round the art gallery gets an added boost when five famous pictures come alive for her – indeed, she's literally absorbed in them. She splashes alongside Constable's **Hay Wain** chats up Ingres' **Madame Moitessier**, shelters beneath **Les Parapluies de Renoir** (which don't help her much when she comes to Rousseau's **Tropical Storm with Tiger**) and vies with the **Dynamic Suprematism** of Malevich! Well might the book warn would-be Katie's that in real life art galleries aren't quite like this. James Mayhew's own style just about copes with the demands made on it – but what a splendid reminder of one of the most important functions of picture books: to introduce kids to Art for its own sake.

The Sandhorse

Ann Turnbull and Michael Foreman, Andersen, 0 86264 231 0, £6.95

More Art for its own sake, in this case equine beach sculpture overtaken by the waves and thereby converted into . . . well, 'white horse' breakers naturally. Ann Turnbull's simple, robust language lends needed vigour to what could easily have been more 'side' than sea. Of course, she does have Michael Foreman to help her, labouring with love to depict St Ives not as it is, but as it ought to be. By the end, between them, author and illustrator fashion a tale with more than a touch of authentic Andersen magic.



The Story of a Farm

John S Goodall, Deutsch, 0 233 98295 7, £5.95

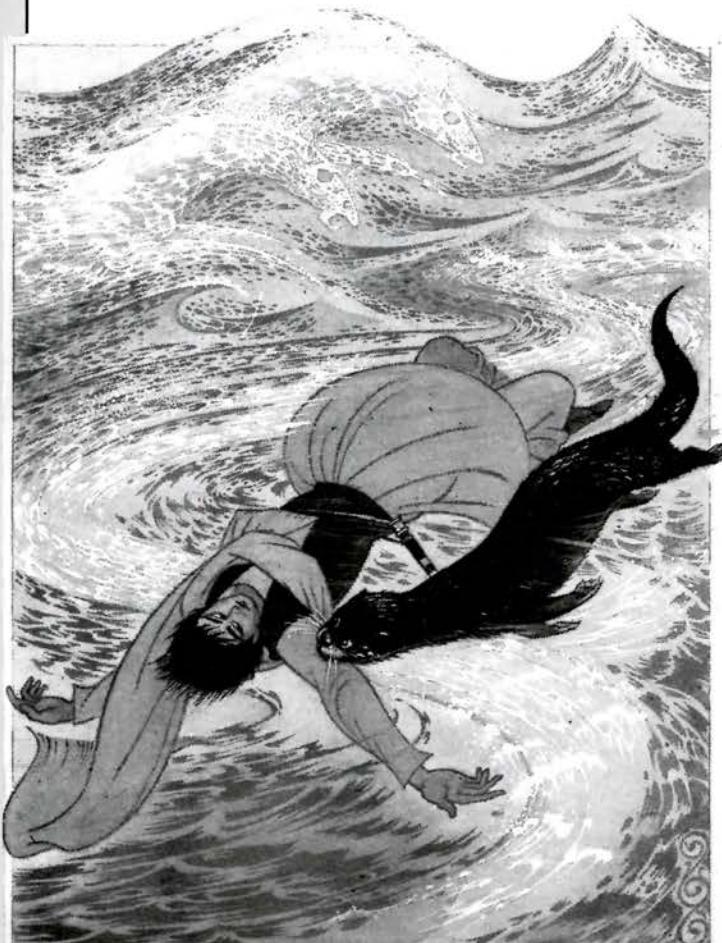
No wordless books are more eloquent than John S Goodall's. This one spans seven hundred years, from swine-herds to cream teas, as each spread meticulously plots the progress of a particular dwelling – interleaved with half-spreads to assist the melding of one age into another. Progress? More an endless adjustment of detail, you feel. Whether milkmaids or landgirls, hunting to hounds or an agricultural show, the changes are fixed exactly by the artist's crayon and wash.



There could be no better time-line for Juniors with a relish for social history – or for creating that relish. Rumour has it that John Goodall was eighty last year. This must surely be a rumour spread by rivals who hope he's slowing up.

Colm of the Islands

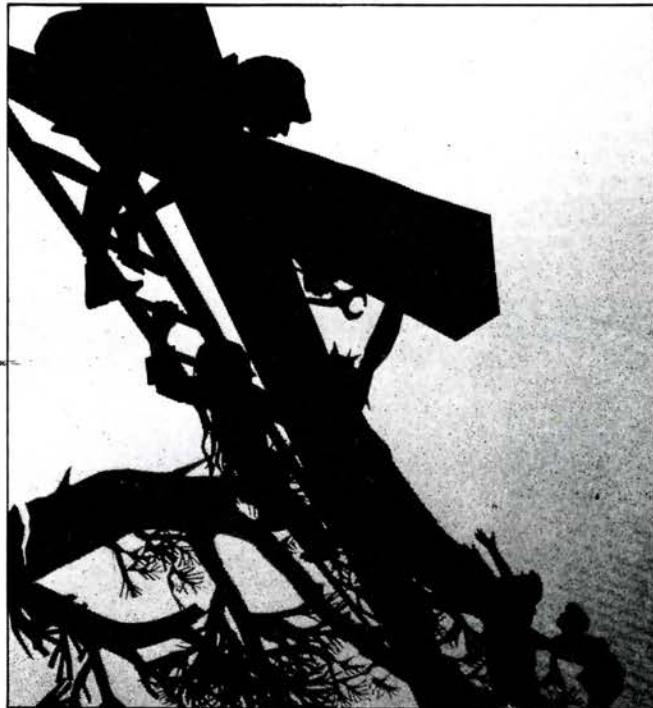
Rosemary Harris and Pauline Baynes, Walker, 0 7445 0700 6, £8.95



A home-grown folklore hero with the panache of Sinbad but a more winning way with animals – not least an otter, a golden eagle and a salmon. That's Colm. Rosemary Harris tells his tale stylishly and with vigour. So does Pauline Baynes, her pictures as bright and rich as an illuminated scroll. There are a lot of them, too, carrying the narrative so successfully that the words – especially in the undersea episodes – are almost an optional extra.

Easter

Jan Pieńkowski, Heinemann, 0 434 95659 7, £6.95



No, not eggs and bunnies but the central mystery of the Christian church unabridged, undiluted and unashamed. The words are from all four gospels of the King James Version. The pictures are from Jan Pieńkowski. Using montage and silhouette, exploiting unusual angles and rich backgrounds, offsetting the sombreness of the story in the main frame by a luxurious burgeoning of leaf and berry and flower across the rest of the page, he manages to persuade us that every other version we've ever seen is either pallid, pretentious or hopelessly fussy. What even the great paintings of the Renaissance do I hear you object? Well, yes. Even those while we're turning *these* pages. For here is a succession of images we recognise from centuries past but in a form our century has made its own: the strip cartoon. So bold, sumptuous and beautifully produced is this book I'd recommend every copy be chained to a lectern instantly.

And, finally, back to the beginning . . .



B is for Breakfast
we're having in bed

Quentin Blake's ABC

Quentin Blake, Jonathan Cape, 0 224 02617 8, £6.95

A is for Another ABC, you think – till the brisk, Blake magic takes over. The design is disarmingly straightforward, the pictures as witty and fresh as ever and the letter-defining text nimble and un-hackneyed:

'W is for Watch
we can hear the tick-tocks.
X is the ending
for Jack-in-the-boX.'

. . . with an Xtremely scared Granny on the receiving end. Quentin Blake treats all the traps as no traps at all, merely opportunities to be inventive. And so he is, splendidly, but always within a child's scope. What's that? How does he . . . ? Oh, yes. No problem:

'Y is for Yak
he's our hairiest friend.
Z is for Zippers
That's all
That's the end.'

moving ON.. moving IN..

From 1st June

Peters
LIBRARY SERVICE

will have moved, onwards and upwards!

The new building in Bromsgrove Street is a stone's throw away from Thorp St and brings all our library services under one roof!

 **Showroom
Reinforcing**

 **Servicing
Schools**

We now boast a large car park at the rear of the building - loud cheers! - an in house events area - a librarians' lounge - more posters - but most importantly a larger, brighter, more attractive showroom that will carry the greatly increased quantities of picture books, easy readers and non-fiction missing from Thorp St - and it's all displayed as you wish to see it - on one floor - no more running up and down stairs and dodging round corners!

Come and see us soon and we'll tell you what Sadlers Wells are planning for our old Thorp St site, and how you can spot us on TV during this years Birmingham Super Prix.

Our new address is

I S PETERS & SON LTD **120 Bromsgrove Street, Birmingham B5 6RL**
Telephone 021-666 6646 Fax 021-666 7033

moving UP!

Peters
LIBRARY SERVICE

NEWS

MOTHER GOOSE AWARD 1989

Anne Marley, one of the judges, gives an account of this year's award for 'the best newcomer to British children's book illustration.'

Have you ever watched the Grand National? Making this year's Mother Goose Award was rather like watching the race (no bets, of course, but all with our own soft spots for certain entries!). It was a crowded field, over 40 in the running from a wide variety of stables, large and small. There was considerable excitement at the quality of the field.

There were lots of thrills and spills, with quite a lot falling at the early fences for a variety of reasons – not eligible (publishers, please note the terms of the Award – for the most promising *newcomer* to children's book illustration!), not enough substance, or perhaps too derivative, but a respectable number made it round the course to the second circuit (the final panel meeting). There was a lot of excitement and jostling for position as they approached Beecher's Brook (decision-making time) with the four who finally made it over and on to the final stretch being encouraged by their supporters in the stands (the Panel) who hotly argued the merits of each entry back and forth. Four entries – **A Balloon for Grandad**, **Bush Vark's First Day Out**, **Rainforest** and **The Secret in the Matchbox** – finally made it over the finishing line with first and second places hotly contested – a real neck-and-neck finish. But, as with every event like this, one entry has to come in first, and **Bush Vark** just had the edge over **Matchbox** and won by a short head.

But enough of this now rather strained analogy.

Bush Vark's First Day Out, written and illustrated by Charles Fuge, is already a Macmillan Prize winner and deservedly so, for its quite stunning illustrations. It was undoubtedly the most original book with its plethora of amazing creatures all trying to devour Bush Vark, who ambles along, oblivious of any trouble, rather like the hen in **Rosie's Walk**. Each page holds something new for the eye to feast on and linger over. His use of colour – oranges, reds, purples, murky greens – all should clash horribly, but don't, instead creating richness and depth in this make-believe world.

The cover almost belies the content; the first impression is rather frightening, but the author's ability in creating this endearing little creature, the Bush Vark, brings in a gentle and amusing vein which will delight the reader. He makes great use of the space available, without feeling obliged to cram every nook and cranny with detail, giving the reader time to appreciate the variety of illustration on each page.

He undoubtedly takes risks in his illustration but the excitement and originality of his artwork make him a worthy winner and we look forward with anticipation to his next piece of work.

It has to be said though that much lively debate went into the final result, with almost a stalemate at one point. **The Secret in the Matchbox**, by Val Willis and illustrated by John Shelley, would no doubt any other year have taken the Golden Egg, for here we had another very promising newcomer. This tongue-in-cheek moral tale for teachers is perfectly complemented by the illustrations, populated by characters who are all a little larger than life. The pages are full of interest – the story can practically be told by the illustrations alone – something we librarians like a lot! There is so much to see in the pictures, with the borders adding even more detail, that the eye sometimes isn't certain what to concentrate on next! But the vibrancy and humour show throughout and the varied angles the illustrator uses add an extra dimension.



Bush Vark.

The oriental pastiche perhaps intrudes a little and the children's expressions could have a little too much similarity, but these were small points in an otherwise excellent first book. It was, incidentally, refreshing and very welcoming to see a realistic multicultural mix in this particular classroom.

It is proof of the merit of these two books that **Rainforest**, written and illustrated by Helen Cowcher, and **A Balloon for Grandad**, written by Nigel Gray and illustrated by Jane Ray, were edged down the field.

A cautionary note on our environment is sounded in the striking illustrations of **Rainforest** which highlight a real ecological problem. The vivid colours of the jungle creatures are all wonderfully captured, but the most amazing piece of illustration has to be the page featuring the howler monkey screeching his warning to his fellow animals of the impending arrival of man and his devastating machines. There is a great sense of drama in these loose, wet and bold illustrations, but the quality isn't always maintained on every page. However, the panel felt that here was a talented illustrator, whose future contributions we would welcome with interest.

Jane Ray's illustrations for **A Balloon for Grandad**, in contrast to those of **Rainforest**, are quite precise and detailed. There is a warmth depicted in the illustrations of the family when Sam, the boy, discovers his balloon has been blown away and he is comforted by his father. The fantasy of the balloon being blown to where his grandfather Abdullah lives is beautifully handled in these quiet reflective pictures, whose varied perspectives and unusual angles engage both the eye and imagination. It is interesting to note that the panel recognised Jane Ray's talent in 1987 in her illustrations of **Island of the Children**, but since this was not considered to be a substantial enough contribution for Mother Goose, being marginal to the poetry and mostly decorative, it was not eligible.

So, that was another year – a good one on the whole and promising well for the future of children's book illustration, though as usual we bemoaned the lack of good information books being entered by publishers, and despite the fact that two of our shortlist had a multicultural content, not enough of the other submissions did. But we finished feeling confident that next year, as we slip into the 1990s, we shall have even more to look forward to, if this year is anything to go by. ■

Bush Vark's First Day Out, Charles Fuge, Macmillan, 0 333 46280 7, £6.50

The Secret in the Matchbox, Val Willis, ill. John Shelley, Deutsch, 0 233 98088 1, £5.50

Rainforest, Helen Cowcher, Deutsch, 0 233 98266 3, £5.95

A Balloon for Grandad, Nigel Gray, ill. Jane Ray, Orchard, 1 85213 125 X, £6.25

The Mother Goose Award is sponsored by Books for Children Ltd.

The judges this year were Anthony Browne, Sally Grindley, Pat Hutchins, Lisa Kopper, Colin McNaughton, Anne Marley, Elaine Moss and Chris Powling.

Anne Marley is at present on secondment from Hampshire School Library Service to set up a Multicultural Resources Centre for the county.