

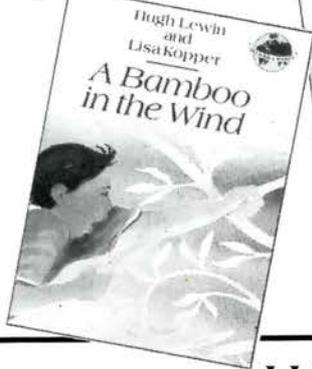
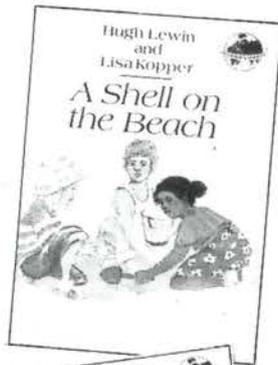
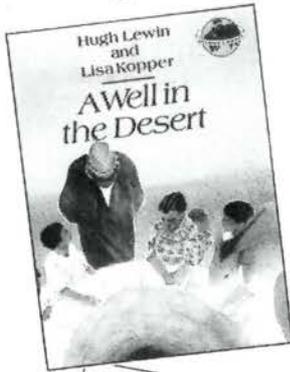
BOOKS FOR KEEPS

the children's book magazine

JULY 1989 No. 57
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4-6 year olds
Roger McGough
Readathon**



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Contents

Editor's Page	3
News and comment from the Editor	
Information Books for Four to Six Year Olds	4
Eleanor von Schweinitz looks at some recent material	
Reviews	7
Paperbacks	16
Non-fiction	
Authorgraph No. 57	14
Roger McGough	
Lifeline 4: Projects and Topics	19
Pat Thomson concludes her series with the theme of Minibeasts	
A Visit to Pakistan	23
John Dunne reports	
Awards	24
Carnegie, Greenaway, Farjeon, Earthworm, Science Book Prize, & Best Books for Babies	
Sound and Vision	25
An update on forthcoming tie-ins	
Readathon	26
Brough Girling describes Britain's largest reading event	
News	28

Cover Story

The stunning photograph on our cover by George Bernard is taken from **Strawberry** by Jennifer Coldrey, published by A & C Black in the 'Stopwatch' series (0 7136 3052 3, £4.50).

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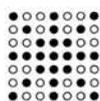
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EDITOR'S PAGE



They all told me children's non-fiction would be difficult. Everybody finds it difficult – publishers, teachers, librarians, and, in particular, children's books review magazines! Difficult, that is, to get it right whether you're making it, choosing it, or reviewing it. The cop-out, of course, is not to worry too much, just to work with what's there. But that ain't the **BfK** way, nor, I suspect, will it be for the vast majority of our readers. More of us are beginning to grapple with questions that attempt to enlarge our understanding of what exactly makes for good Information Books. In our ignorance of so much of the subject matter, how can we tell if its communication, particularly to children, is achieved as effectively as possible? These questions are being asked most frequently at the infant end of the age range. Teachers and librarians have, for a long time now, been searching, mostly in vain, for reliable material. From the publishing houses too I detect a gathering momentum of non-fiction publishing for the 4-6s. Judging by their record, A & C Black are going to be at the forefront of this development with standard-setting, state-of-the-art series like 'Stopwatch' (see an example on our cover), 'Friends' and their new offering, 'Simple Science', published in May this year. In our first article (page 4) Eleanor von Schweinitz tackles the tricky question of Information Books for Four to Six Year Olds and has tried to isolate the best of what's available. In the event it turned out to be disappointingly thin on the ground. For the moment, we hope. And on page 16 we welcome to the **BfK** team Ted Percy and Geoff Brown who have given us our first-ever reviews of non-fiction titles which we intend will become a regular feature of this magazine. That in part depends upon our ability to find more of those rarest of beings, good non-fiction reviewers (which we reckon Ted and Geoff to be) and, it has to be said, an appropriate level of support from publishers with non-fiction lists who persistently bemoan the lack of good non-fiction reviewing, and rightly so. Not an easy task on both counts.

Readathon to break a million?

Ever since it started I have wanted to carry in **BfK** something on a remarkable and increasingly successful annual event, Readathon, except that purist voices restrained me with dark hints that fund-raising activities riding on the back of children's reading was in some way suspect. But you can't ignore the fact that in this coming Readathon season the campaign is hoping to break the one million pound barrier and this extraordinary progress could only have been achieved with the support of an awful lot of teachers and their children. We asked the campaign director, Brough Girling (also Head of the Children's Book Foundation), to give us a condensed account of whence and whither Readathon (see page 26). But that's only half the story. What we're looking for next is a piece from a Readathon participating school or schools, telling it from their side – why they decided to have a go and, more importantly, what, if any, were the beneficial effects (or otherwise) for the children and their reading? Any volunteers out there? Phone us if you're interested in helping us to pen part two.

A Visit to Pakistan

When we heard John Dunne, the Assistant County Librarian for Hampshire, one evening around the supper table, talking about his recent trip to Pakistan on behalf of the Government of Sind and organised by the British Council, it made for fascinating listening. Many of us know so little of children's book activities overseas that when

you hear about them, it puts our own home concerns into perspective (sometimes with a vengeance) but also reaffirms the instinct that we have more in common with our children's book colleagues and friends in other parts of the world than we realise. One page (page 23) does not do John's account justice. The supper table encounter was full of anecdotes about the people – librarians, teachers and students – who strive to bring children and books together with a fraction of the resources we enjoy in the West.

Who Wrote This?

*Ever see
a chimp
with a limp*

*That's because
they keep to trees.*

*Twisted ankles
and scraped knees*

*In Monkeydom
are vanities.*

The authentic touch of . . . Roger McGough, of course. He's the subject of this issue's Authorgraph, our answer to the centre-fold. As a hugely popular poet for children, Roger is especially interesting in that he's also published ten volumes of poetry for adults and sees no crucial distinction between his two audiences. Indeed he often performs for both at the same time. See page 14 for our tribute to a genuine 'poet of the people' whatever their age.

Finally, a change at Books for Keeps . . .

After almost fifty issues – just about ten years' worth of **BfK** – Pat Triggs is standing down as our regular Editor. Better than anyone we know how much the magazine owes her for its success. Her knowledge, enthusiasm and tireless work to promote books and the reading habit is hard to match anywhere in the field of children's literature. In many ways her voice became our voice. It is such an eloquent, informed and intelligent voice that we hope it will not be too long before we hear it again under the **BfK** aegis. All of us send Pat our warmest thanks for her remarkable contribution.

After Pat, then who? Well I'm delighted to announce the appointment of Chris Powling as the new Editor of **Books for Keeps**. Chris's credentials are potent ones to take this magazine into its second decade and to bring a change of tempo, pace and range whilst still retaining the best of Pat's legacy. Besides being a teacher all his working life – in secondary schools (including a magical few years under the legendary Michael Marland), in primary schools (ten years as Head of one of the largest primary schools in London), and now as lecturer at King Alfred's College in Winchester – he has also presented editions of Radio 4's **Kaleidoscope** for many years but is probably best known to us as an extremely successful children's author. This combination of education, the media and writer puts **BfK** into sure hands. When asked whether being an Editor wouldn't inhibit his first love of writing, he said, 'It didn't hold Dickens back!', and roared with laughter. He picks up the reins in September. You can't possibly miss him . . .

'... undoubtedly one of the most challenging areas for the information book publisher.'

Information Books for Four to Six Year Olds

Eleanor von Schweinitz takes a look at some recent material for nursery and infant schools

Four to six year olds are endlessly curious – they ask more questions than at any other stage in childhood. This is a critical time for learning, when so many foundations are being laid. Whether in the home, the playgroup, nursery or infant class, much of that learning takes place through the exploration of the immediate environment and through discussion of their discoveries. Language lies at the heart of this. What part can information books play?

Books can be a means of introducing new experiences, inviting consideration of the unfamiliar, reinforcing understanding of basic concepts, stimulating questions and encouraging experiment. They can inform and explain, suggest desirable behaviour patterns and, perhaps most important, they can direct observation, prompting recognition of pattern and meaning in things observed.

Librarians and teachers have long bemoaned the lack of adequate choice of information books for this crucial age group. But there have always been publishers with a few titles tucked away amongst their story books for the under-fives. These colourful little books are aimed at parents and introduce colour, size, shape, counting and other basic concepts. They are books to be shared and talked about. They rarely have any great 'educational' pretensions, but they are invariably jolly and occasionally feature familiar nursery favourites such as Spot. They range from board books to more fragile paperbacks and, although a few represent the work of some of the most gifted contemporary picture book artists, the style and quality of their artwork varies widely. Most of them are priced sufficiently keenly to be widely accessible in retail outlets ranging from W H Smith's to Sainsbury's.

But in the last year or so there have been signs that one or two of the specialist information book publishers are prepared to tackle this tricky area, designing books which are more closely geared to the needs of schools. Many of these new books are characterised by very high quality photographic illustrations, and it is significant that the names of some of the photographers are becoming as familiar as those of the authors.

Because this is the stage when reading skills are only just being developed, there are considerable problems for publishers designing information books for four to six year olds. Since texts will only be accessible to children who have started to read, books need to be considered from three complementary viewpoints. First, what messages and prompts can children get from the pictures, both viewed alone and in relation to each other? Second, what role does the text play in achieving the book's objectives, and how do the illustrations and text interact? Third, how might both text and illustrations be used by an adult discussing the book with a child or a group of children?

It is obvious that such questions were considered when Henry Pluckrose and Ruth Thomson were writing and editing the Thinkabout and Knowabout series for Franklin Watts. Without being unduly solemn, these books have well-defined educational objectives and seek to prompt questions and discussion in a structured context. Together they explore the world of the senses, of shape and size, and basic mathematical notions such as weight and length. Using large colour photographs of familiar objects, they stimulate ideas about relationships focusing on such activities as matching, sorting and estimating. Here, as in all good information books, the implicit questions are just as important as the explicit.

An increasing number of information books introduce basic scientific ideas to young children. **My Feather** in a new Simple Science series from A & C Black uses very good studio photographs by Fiona Pragoff and a clear, simple text by Jane Mainwaring ('When I bend my feather, it doesn't break.'). The illustrations make their points so unambiguously that a child could grasp the characteristic properties of feathers without reading the text. A concluding feature for parents and teachers provides information to be used in discussion.



From *Weight*, Franklin Watts 'Knowabout' series

Using large colour photographs of familiar objects, they stimulate ideas about relationships focusing on such activities as matching, sorting and estimating.

When I bend
my feather,
it doesn't break.



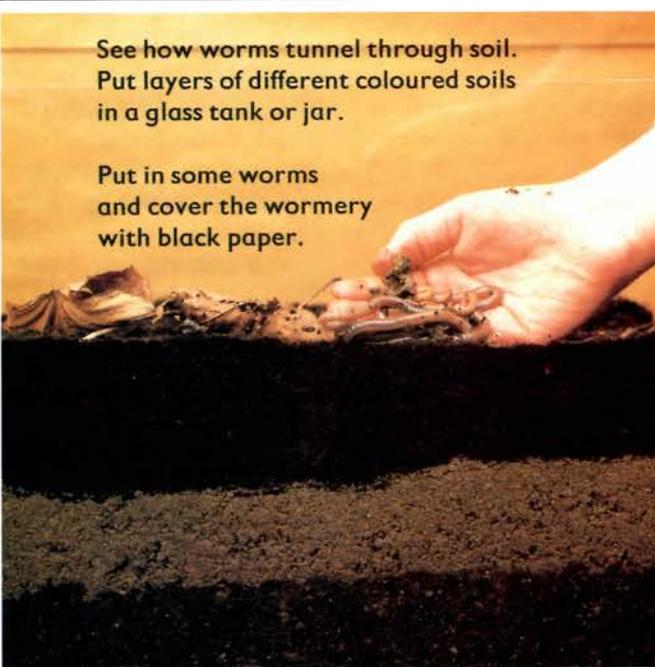
From *My Feather*, A & C Black's 'Simple Science' series

The illustrations make their points so unambiguously that a child could grasp the characteristic properties of feathers without reading the text.

Photographs and a very simple interacting text are also the essence of Franklin Watts' Talkabouts. Topics (**Growing** for example) are well chosen to match the needs of the infant stage and the text poses questions and makes brief factual statements. As an example of a book incorporating well thought-out suggestions for activities, take a look at *Soil*. But there is a price to be paid for the high quality photography and professional planning of all the Franklin Watts series – and with so little competition it's not surprising that they cost £5.95.

See how worms tunnel through soil.
Put layers of different coloured soils
in a glass tank or jar.

Put in some worms
and cover the wormery
with black paper.



From *Soil*, Franklin Watts' 'Talkabout' series

Much more modestly priced at £3.50 is the Into Science series from Oxford. Topics range from the fundamentals of physics (**Balancing**) to living things (**Spiders**) and each book places a strong emphasis on things to do. They represent a rather old-fashioned and inflexible

view of the way books are used by young children. Some titles are more successful than others, but all suffer from the dominance of the text which spells everything out with the repetitive tedium of the early reader. The illustrations are there to represent or amplify the text, not to stimulate or stir imaginative speculation. Anyone who has bought **Balancing** in this series should take a closer look at pages 12-15 and then read the notes for parents and teachers at the back. If you can't spot the error – try it out... obviously the illustrator has a better grasp of the laws of physics than the author.

In a recently published series from Hamish Hamilton, Janet Fitzgerald uses the Seasons as a framework for a string of questions and related activities concerning plants, animals and farming. The choice of a new topic on each page opening can sometimes lend the proceedings a random air. Not all questions seem worth asking – some don't have a sensible answer – and there is more than a suspicion that questions are being asked for questions' sake. But used judiciously by teacher or parent, observation could be sharpened and thoughtful deductions encouraged. However, there seems no obvious reason why these quite modest little books should cost £6.50.

It is spring on the farm and
rabbits eat young shoots.



What is the rabbit
doing in the field?

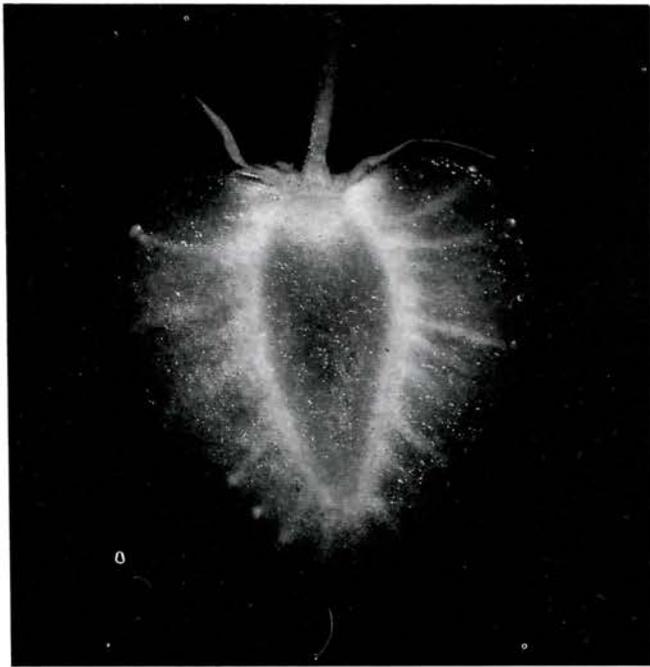
Does the farmer
like the rabbit?

How will the rabbit
know when the farmer
is coming?

From *Spring on the Farm*, Hamish Hamilton's 'Science Through the Seasons' series

Not all questions seem worth asking – some don't have a sensible answer – and there is more than a suspicion that questions are being asked for questions' sake.

Because four to six year olds are beginning readers, teachers make considerable use of clear illustrations from books intended for older children. This is where the superbly produced Stopwatch books from A & C Black have proved invaluable. Each examines an aspect of the life cycle of a familiar plant or animal through a sequence of excellent high-definition colour photographs which show detail with absolute clarity. Texts are spare, addressing the reader directly, drawing attention to details in the illustrations so that text and illustrations are cleverly integrated. A simple statement heads each page and provides an accessible lead-in for beginning readers. Books in this series can supplement children's direct observations – both by directing their attention to points to look for and by showing detail that it would be difficult or impossible to see with the naked eye. At £4.50 they are good value, comparing very favourably with Wayland's Life Cycle series at £5.95.



From **Strawberry**, A & C Black's 'Stopwatch' series

Texts are spare, addressing the reader directly, drawing attention to details in the illustrations so that text and illustrations are cleverly integrated.

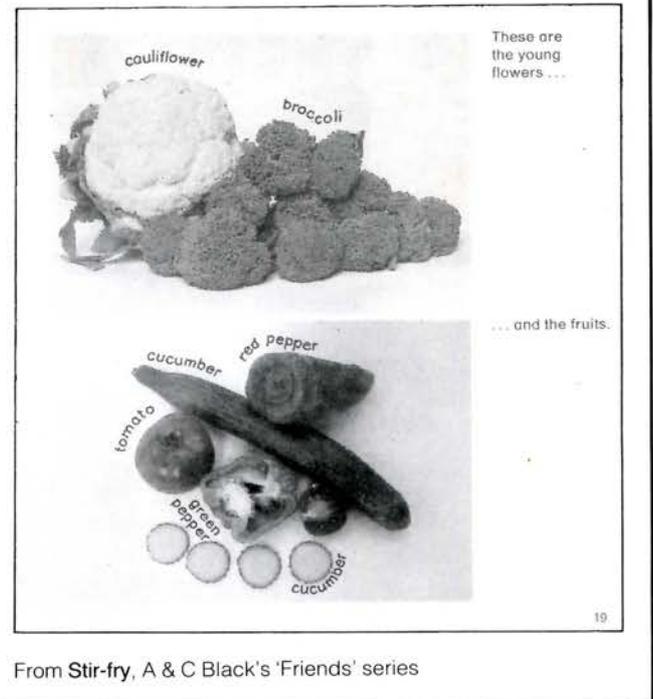
Here is the text which goes with this illustration, also reproduced on our cover:

'Look at the big photograph. Each seed is joined to the middle of the strawberry by a pale line. These lines are the veins which carry food to the seeds.'

Books on 'ourselves' are always in demand in infant classes and once again Franklin Watts have visually stimulating examples in the Look At series, with titles such as **Faces**, **Feet** and **Teeth**. Joan Solomon's **Everybody's Hair**, in A & C Black's Friends series, has good colour photography and is especially valuable for its multicultural dimension. But there is a need for more books at a simple introductory level on such topics.

There are very few suitable books on everyday materials, products and services for this age group. Most books on food, for example, are too complex in subject matter and approach. Honourable exceptions are **Finger Foods** and **Stir-fry** (again in the Friends series) which use a friendly, accessible approach based on the everyday experiences of a multicultural classroom.

Books aimed at the home market often use a narrative text embodying information in a simple story – and the best of these books have a valuable place in the classroom library. There is a long-standing tradition of natural history books of this kind and, more recently, a growing number of books designed to prepare young children for new experiences. Some are simple narratives aimed at the very young – which take a light-hearted approach with amusing illustrations. A few strive for greater 'realism' with more extended narrative and photographic illustrations. The greatest choice exists in books about going to school, hospital, the dentist and so on. There are a growing number of books on aspects of safety, ranging from crossing the road, to taking care with strangers (Bob Gillham's **Play Safe** is an especially robust and positive example of the latter). There is also an increasing willingness to tackle more complex emotional questions such as family break-up and death, as well as the problems of children with special needs. But however useful these books are, they must always seem somewhat didactic and con-



From **Stir-fry**, A & C Black's 'Friends' series

trived when looked at alongside 'real' books such as John Burningham's **Granpa** or Shirley Hughes's **Lucy and Tom Go to School**.

Viewed overall, this age group gets a poor deal when it comes to information books – especially when compared with the range of materials published for seven to twelve year olds. We have moved on from the days when an indiscriminate selection of Macdonald Starters dominated every classroom book corner, but we still have a long way to go. It will be interesting to see whether the new Firefly books, which are specialising in this end of the market, have anything new to offer. There are no simple prescriptions. The appropriate blend of information and stimulation, of text and illustration, of assertion, question, and activity, can be judged only against specific objectives and in specific contexts. This is undoubtedly one of the most challenging areas for the information book publisher. ■

REVIEWS

Nursery/Infant

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



Milton.

Milton the Early Riser
Robert Kraus, ill. Jose Aruego and Ariane Dewey, Hippo, 0 590 76079 3, £2.25

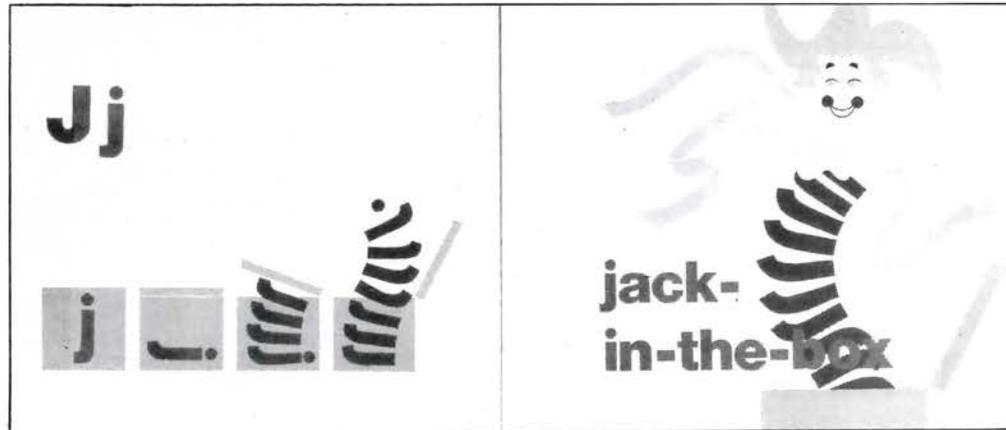
Another glorious book from the team who gave us **Leo the Late Bloomer**. Milton's efforts to entertain himself when the whole world sleeps, and goes on sleeping and . . . sleeping, gains an immediate response of sympathetic understanding from anyone sharing the book. Congratulations must go to Hippo for resisting the temptation to produce the book in a small format – it is perfect just as it is; to have done so would have seriously diminished its impact and appeal. JS

Maisie Middleton at the Wedding

Nita Sowter, Picture Lions, 0 00 662952 0, £2.25

Maisie Middleton is an old favourite which makes this scrumptious new book about her all the more welcome. The prospect for Maisie, a confirmed tomboy, of being a bridesmaid at her Aunt Rosy's wedding is clearly appalling. With gentle humour Nita Sowter shows her resistance becoming less and less, as she meets George, the proposed pageboy, who casually mentions the banquet that usually follows a wedding, and she finds that the dress isn't really so itchy and tickly. The day quite restores her faith in weddings, so much so that she and George invent a wedding game to play in the garden afterwards. A book to go 'Ah!' over – we all did! JS

Maisie Middleton.



Alphabatics

Suse MacDonald, Picturemac, 0 333 48603 X, £3.99

A large-format colourful book, full of rich pattern. A double spread is given over to each letter, which gradually changes its shape to become the object depicting the letter. Although alphabet books are not at this moment very fashionable, this would be useful in the classroom or at home. There is plenty of detail and lots to discuss on every page. Very much to be recommended. MS

The Toothbrush Monster

0 14 050.702 7



The Bedtime Beast

0 14 050.703 5
Rose Impey and Sue Porter, Picture Puffin, £2.25 each

Both these stories, labelled 'The Baddies', deal with the problem of children who are reluctant to do what their parents want (i.e. clean their teeth or go to bed). They are attractive, easy to handle and give a realistic view of parents struggling to help children get ordinary, everyday things done. In fact, although the books may amuse children, it may be that parents will benefit more from them. Well, why not? Parents need all the help they can get! MS

Barney's Forgotten Birthday

0 416 14002 5

Barney's Big Spring Clean

0 416 14012 2

Peter Bonnici, ill. Lisa Kopper, Magnet, £2.50 each

There was a rapturous response to these two books from my Infants. Barney, a real favourite from TV, is a large bumbling Old English Sheepdog who, with a crew of unlikely friends, bumbles his way from close catastrophe to near disaster. The books themselves have all the charm of Lisa Kopper's gentle illustrations and a simple reassuring storyline. The children knew the formula and guessed the outcome each time, though a couple of the more literal-minded wondered, as I did, just who was going to clear up all the mess that resulted from Barney's spring clean! JS

The Adventures of Albert, the Running Bear

Barbara Isenberg and Susan Wolf, ill. Dick Gackenbach, Picturemac, 0 333 48383 9, £2.95

This is a real winner, completely captivating the children. Albert, a performing circus bear, moves to the zoo when his circus goes out of business and, bored in his cage, decides to practise his tricks. The zoo visitors are delighted and shower him with titbits despite the warning notices (our Infants were very shocked and indignant at this point!) with the inevitable result that he becomes too fat and has to go on a drastic diet.

In desperation he escapes from the zoo in search of marshmallows and fruit gums and, after a dreadful experience in the rubbish lorry, becomes involved in a marathon race; the rest you'll have to read for yourselves. As a book to entice readers ever-faithful to the old favourite **Football Crazy**, this is a must and has passed from hand to hand ever since it was first introduced to the class. JS

Lucy and Tom's 1.2.3.

Shirley Hughes, Picture Puffin, 0 14 050.795 7, £2.50

What can one say about Shirley Hughes – except that she is magic! Every book becomes a favourite almost before you open the cover – with pages to savour, new things to discover at each reading and others to treasure as old friends. The contrived 1.2.3. formula is never felt but instead we have, persuasively portrayed, Lucy and Tom's fascination with the world of mathematics that surrounds them and this entices even the most blasé to share in the excitement. JS



Anna's Special Present

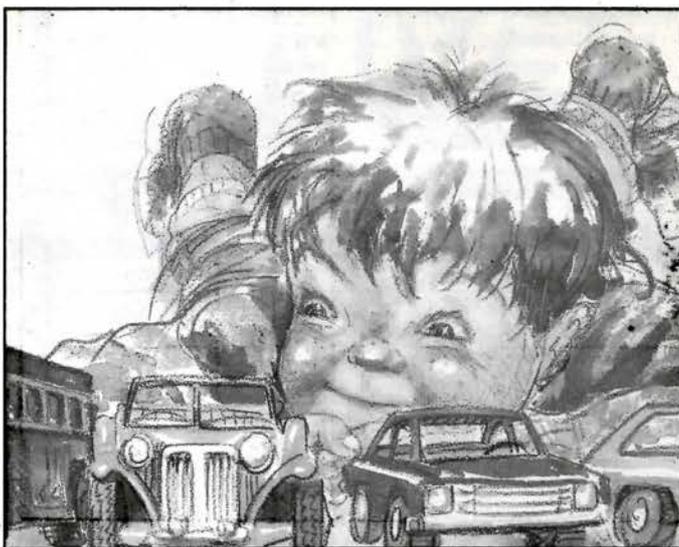
Yoriko Tsutsui, ill.
Akiko Hayashi, Picture
Puffin, 0 14 050.732 9,
£2.50

A special book this, covering the experiences of Anna as she is pitchforked into coping alone when an emergency strikes the family and her mother has to rush her younger sister to hospital with appendicitis. The cultural differences, such as Japanese writing in the illustrations, origami or more seriously the way Anna's mother left her alone in a flat with only a next-door neighbour across the corridor listening out for her, were accepted with interest but didn't in any way detract from the urgency with which the children were willing me to read on. JS

William, King of the Road

Laura Newton, ill.
Jacqueline Rog, Picture
Lions, 0 00 663368 4,
£2.25

If you have a child in your house or in your class who is interested in cars, this is the book for you. It is about William who loves any kind of vehicle and gets enormous pleasure from playing with cars, ambulances, transporters and lorries while inventing crashes and other dramatic happenings. It is such an ordinary sort of idea yet a good one to reinforce conversation and discussion which can help in various ways. Definitely to be recommended. MS



Infant/Junior

Adventures of Zot the Dog

Ivan Jones, Young
Puffin Read Alone,
0 14 03.2348 1, £1.75



Zot and his unlikely escapades have already proved popular with my readers in the original hardcover version and now it is good to see that more new solo readers will have the opportunity to enjoy the five short episodes about the very scruffy dog and his friend, Clive. The zany illustrations on every page and large well-spaced type give a very 'user friendly' feel to the book. JB

Lucy Keeps the Wolf from the Door

Ann Jungman, Young
Lions, 0 00 673050 7,
£1.95

The first two books featuring Lucy and her wolf friend, 2.15, who acquired his unlikely name from a train, were a great success with my children both as read-alouds and for solo reading, so I've no doubt that this will be a winner too. Here 2.15 undergoes something of a character change when he and 3.45 become the proud parents of three cubs.

All 2.15's old friends - Lucy's mum and dad, Grandad and Gran, not to mention the



irascible Pete Grubb and his wife Lily - are featured, and the fun, or rather chaos, starts when 2.15, now a confirmed vegetarian, makes arrangements for the christening celebration of his new offspring. Don't miss this one. JB

Hetty Pegler Half-Witch

Margaret Greaves,
Magnet, 0 416 13122 0,
£1.75

The fact that Jane, Ben and Toby's 'Holiday Child' guest is half Pegler (the witch half) and half Brown (the human half) results in some tricky situations for the children, like the time mum's shopping trolley is transformed first into a plaid pony and then into four toads, all to save trouble! And then there's the matter of the Smirk...

An amusing, imaginative book for younger juniors, either listeners or readers. JB

Our Sleepysaurus

Martin Waddell,
0 7445 0831 2

Sophie's Snail

Dick King-Smith,
0 7445 0829 0

Andrew McAndrew
Bernard Mac Laverty,
0 7445 0830 4

Ponders

Russell Hoban,
0 7445 0820 2

Walker Read Aloud
series, £1.99 each

'No pets' is the rule in the flats where Marigold, Rashid and Niki live and the Mean Man is there to see that the rule is enforced, so it takes a bit of lateral thinking when Marigold discovers the Sleepysaurus. The Old Ladies (residents) are determined to keep their new 'rock garden', the Mean Man is forced to concede defeat and the children acquire an unusual pet. Problems begin though when a heat wave strikes giving the Sleepysaurus a seemingly unquenchable thirst.

Billed as a 'Read Aloud', this amusing story with its jokey, action-filled illustrations could be enjoyed by new solo readers as well as older infant listeners. The title story, 'Sophie's Snail', is one of six about Sophie (four) who has six-year-old twin brothers. Sophie has a mind of her own which takes surprising turns, not least her determination to save up enough money to be a farmer. Meanwhile, she makes do with woodlice, earwigs and earthworms - potting shed farming.

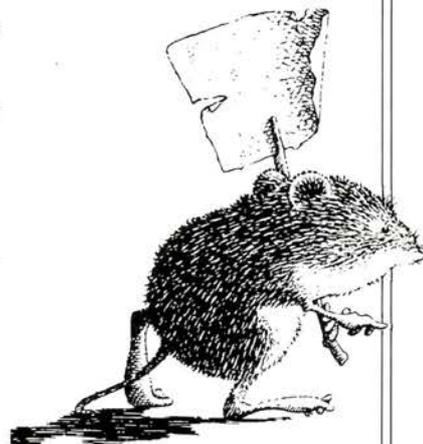
Dick King-Smith's witty style, combined with his obvious love of animals of all kinds, means that, despite the tender years of the chief protagonist, this book should appeal to children up to about eight, many of whom would enjoy it for themselves.

Revolving around Andrew McAndrew, rising five, are eight short episodes all of which have a pattern: Andrew talks to himself in rhyme and these rhymes take the form of wishes: 'Andrew McAndrew what would you like? All I want is a little red bike'; or intentions: 'Andrew McAndrew what is there to

do? Paint Grandad's bells a nice shade of blue', which are then fulfilled in the cosy, domestic stories in which Andrew's grandfather features large.

The stories will appeal to listeners of around Andrew's age. The interest though is narrower than the other three titles in the series: I cannot imagine many children able to read the book for themselves, wanting to.

Ponders is a collection of eight animal stories featuring creatures (American) who live in and around a pond. One always expects something unusual from Russell Hoban and these stories are no exception. Here he extends the real life habits of animals such as the frog, the snapper turtle, the crow and the possum to create characters each with its own eccentricities. So, Grover Crow's main interest is 'objects of art' and Charlie Meadows (mouse) has a paper round.



Hoban's language and ideas demand more sophistication from a listening audience, or from solo readers, than the others in the series. JB

The Runaway Shoes and Other Stories

Chosen by Barbara Ireson, Puffin, 0 14 03.2270 1, £2.99

This is an excellent collection of stories. Nearly all were new to me and I liked them very much. The choice of authors is very wide-ranging and includes Dorothy Edwards, Arthur Ransome, Pamela Oldfield and Iris Grender as well as some lesser known names and, of course, our old friend Anon. The stories are equally catholic, ranging through magic, animals, monsters, school stories and fairy tales, and provide a wonderful source of read-aloud tales as well as a veritable feast for young fluent readers to sample for themselves. My seven-year-old book devourers loved this book – it's big, fat and inviting and yet each story is short enough to be read at a sitting. Highly recommended both for children's reading and the teacher's collection. LW

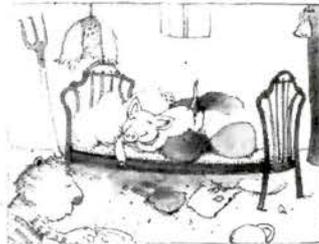


The story is, as you would expect from Dick King-Smith, very funny and yet he manages to maintain the animal-ness of his characters throughout their unlikely adventures. They are not humans in disguise, nor are they twee or patronised. We enjoyed this very much as a read-aloud story and it has been borrowed by the children ever since. LW

Hello, Little Pig

Janosch, translated by Anthea Bell, Hippo, 0 590 76077 7, £2.25

A highly moral tale about how Little Tiger is seduced away from his nice, ordered life with Little Bear by the loose living of Little Pig. But, alas, all is a snare and a delusion! Once in Little Pig's house, Little Tiger has to do all the work; he decides to go back home, but where is Little Bear? Looking for Little Tiger, of course, and all ends happily when they find each other.



I liked the style of the prose; it has a rather child-like 'and then, and then' feel and the dialogue is much like the sort young children write for themselves. Whether this is due to the original or to the translation I don't know. The illustrations are, of course, the original and are typically Janosch, awkward but charming. Liked by all the children I read it to, or with, but especially by middle infants. LW

The Tooth Ball

Philippa Pearce, ill. Helen Ganly, Picture Puffin, 0 14 050.823 6, £2.50

A very unusual idea gives this story a particular interest and shows that Philippa Pearce knows what will intrigue the younger, picture book reader. Timmy loses one of his milk teeth but, instead of giving it to the tooth fairy, decides to wrap it up and keep it. The wrapping up process gets more and more involved and after layer on layer the 'tooth ball'

is as big as a large balloon. It has magic properties, however, and the ball can not only fly but enables lonely Timmy to find the friends he longs for.

Very attractive to children this. Well illustrated, original and interesting. A lot of discussion led us to decide that maybe the tooth fairy *had* had a hand in it all somewhere! LW

The King Bird

A H Benjamin, ill. Tony Ross, Picture Corgi, 0 552 52481 6, £2.50

A fairly lunatic story perfectly matched by fairly lunatic illustrations. A king who is dotty about his pet birds drives the queen to get rid of them. In retaliation he gets his magician to turn him into a bird, making his wife's life a misery until, finally, the great British art of compromise is reached.

This needs a mature reader to make the most of the story, the language being quite complex, but sevens and over appreciated the humour in both the situation and the pictures. The queen, on her way to bed, stopped in her tracks by the sight of the king sitting on a nest he has made, was particularly chuckled over. Well worth trying. LW

The Great Big Especially Beautiful Easter Egg

James Stevenson, Picture Piper, 0 330 29898 4, £2.50

There is a sly little joke at the end of this book which relies entirely on the ability to read the expression on Granpa's face. Some children 'got' this hidden meaning, others didn't, but that didn't stop them enjoying the story.

Granpa relates a very tall tale about an Easter egg hunt in his youth which involves amazing adventures. The story is carried as much in the jolly pictures and captions as in the brief text so children of all reading abilities could join in the narration of events and enjoy the jokes. The plot is rather Americanised in some parts and relies on children knowing about the Easter bunny and Easter egg hunting but, since nearly all do these days, it didn't seem to matter.



Nor did it matter that we were reading the story in early summer rather than at Easter; it was still good fun, although perhaps a little more so at the appropriate time of year! LW

Alex and Roy: Best Friends

Mary Dickinson, ill. Charlotte Firmin, Hippo, 0 590 85864 5, £1.75

Alex and Roy are back for the fifth time round with a series of stories in which the cantankerous pals harass their long-suffering families, negotiate various adult rituals, and repeatedly fall out with each other over trifles. The thirteen episodes are very loosely bound together by the theme of Roy's desire to own a pet dog. Simply told and gently entertaining stories for younger readers who like their fiction mild. GH

A House Inside Out

Penelope Lively, ill. David Parkins, Puffin, 0 14 03.2399 6, £1.75

Penelope Lively explores the labyrinths created by the plumbing, insulation and waste disposal arrangements of an ordinary suburban house, and finds a secret world inhabited by creatures whose lives are as magical and humdrum as our own.

Eleven short stories introduce us to the oddly familiar customs of mice, woodlice, spiders and a visiting racing pigeon. A linking narrative is provided by the adventures of the family terrier. The interactions of this domestic fauna with the oblivious giants of the Dixon clan are described with a quiet vividness which generates an enchanting impression of innumerable parallel lives around us. The illustrations, particularly those of the woodlouse and spider episodes, enhance this effect. I would recommend this book to any child acquiring independence in reading, and look forward to a sequel focusing on the lives of household bacteria. GH

Tyrone the Horrible

Hans Wilhelm, Hippo, 0 590 76029 7, £1.95



A really satisfying book with the little dinosaur hero Boland a victim to the bully Tyrone the Horrible, a Tyrannosaurus Rex. He valiantly strives to find some way of getting out of a horrible situation but even the advice of his friends leads to further humiliation and defeat, and it is only when he uses his wits against his enemy that he triumphs in a most satisfying way. JS

Dilly:

The Worst Day Ever

Tony Bradman, ill. Susan Hellard, Magnet, 0 416 13392 4, £1.75

Despite this being the fifth book in the series, I had never met Dilly 'the world's naughtiest dinosaur' before. It seems that I've been missing something because Dilly went down very well with my children.

Written in a pleasantly friendly, first-person style (ostensibly by Dilly's big sister), each story forms one chapter of a big print paperback just right for independent readers gaining stamina or for reading aloud to younger children. Dilly is really anyone's three-year-old brother but the inclusion of exotic dinosaur cultural details such as swamp wallowing lessons, or waiting for Dino Claus to come, adds a nice joke to the familiar naughtiness of the character. Very easy to read or to read aloud, I can recommend this book for any six to seven-year-old. LW

The Hodgeheg

Dick King-Smith, ill. Linda Birch, Young Puffin, 0 14 03.2503 4, £1.99

This seems to be a good month for stories aimed at the young fluent reader. This witty and original story is exactly right for seven to eight-year-olds with a sense of humour and a liking for unusual situations. Max is a young hedgehog determined to solve the hedgehogs' greatest problem – how to cross the road safely. He has many setbacks, including being knocked senseless by a cyclist resulting in a bad attack of scrambled speech (hence the Hodgeheg), before finally discovering the perfect solution.

Winnie the Witch

Valerie Thomas, ill.
Korky Paul, Oxford,
0 19 272197 6, £2.95

'Ace!' was how the kids described it. 'I must have it!' has been the response of nearly every adult I've shown it to. It's one of those books you know you'll have to replace again and again as it gets worn out by eager readers



chasing the delicious details and jokes across the pages. No wonder it won the Children's Book Award.

Winnie the witch lives in a black house with all the right black trimmings for a witch of her stature, and her only problem is that Wilbur, her cat, is also of regulation black. The cat is camouflaged too well in the house but Winnie's attempts to change this have disastrous consequences. JS

Junior/Middle

Sister

Joan Flanagan, Puffin,
0 14 03.2827 0, £1.99

Sister isn't Tom's real sister at all but his small sister Annie's imaginary friend upon whom she blames all her misdeeds; or is she imaginary after all? Tom begins to have his doubts. Then there is his brother Jack whose imaginary friends take the form of the Telequark and Trogs whom he puts in his comic strips. But it's when someone interferes with Dad's computer and the grandfather clock goes crazy that the rest of the family begins to think Annie may be right. Sure enough Sister appears on the dolls' house roof and everyone looks for solutions to rid the household of this pest, something they finally achieve thanks to Jack's cartoon characters. Don't be misled by the format; this wildly imaginative fantasy story is for middle juniors and above. JB

Carrot Top

Nigel Gray, ill. Robin Bell Corfield, Young Lions, 0 00 673369 7, £1.95

This is a collection of stories about Melinda, a little girl with red hair who lives in a city. She's very much today's child and her environment is very much today's city; workmen, building sites, lost purses, unemployment, do-it-yourself and pregnant cats all feature in these stories. Nigel Gray has a good ear for dialogue and for everyday situations and has written a book which reads aloud well and would be enjoyed by any experienced reader from seven upwards - especially if they too lived in a city. I particularly liked the story of Dad's attempt to redecorate the living room and the time Melinda gave away all her toys; I know several families just like this one! LW

The Cabbage Patch Fib

Paul Jennings, Puffin,
0 14 03.2897 1, £1.50

When Dad tells him where babies come from, eight-year-old Chris duly goes outside to search for one in the cabbage

patch and astonishingly finds a bright green infant. Chris is highly delighted, at first that is, but the baby's habit of holding its breath and turning purple unless Chris is on hand makes life extremely difficult for the lad, especially at school. Instead of joining in playground games, poor Chris becomes the role model for a bunch of kids with their cabbage patch dolls. Fortunately the baby's rightful mother reclaims the infant and after another false start Chris and his dad learn the real facts of life.

Told by one of Chris's older sisters, this short, hilarious tale from Australia will have a wide appeal. I can't wait to share it with my class. JB

Smudge

Mike Dickinson, Picture Knight, 0 340 49433 6, £2.50

One of the comments quoted on the back cover of this book describes it as abounding in 'visual artyjokes' and this, as well as being a good summing up of it, also explains why my children didn't really take to it, I think.

Smudge is a little boy from an impressionist painting who gets bored and breaks his way out of the picture. In his attempt to find 'a really exciting picture to live in', he tries to join, among others, King Harold in the Bayeux Tapestry, a Greek vase, a nativity scene and a Henry Moore. He finally finds a home among the children in a Lowery.

There are similarities with Posy Simmonds' *Lulu and the Flying Babies* and, like that, I found the book very witty and enjoyable but, because the children were unfamiliar with the paintings and, indeed, with art galleries at all, the jokes fell flat and they didn't really take to the book. More sophisticated, or older, children might well enjoy *Smudge* however. LW

Mascot

Michael Hardcastle, Magnet, 0 416 13212 X, £1.99

The formula is so successful that reviews are not important. This has long sections about

football matches which keep particular readers very content with interludes of 'Boys Own' morality, playing for the team, which is wonderfully preserved and unselfconscious. Females play no part whatsoever except for two small parts by Mums who deal out sympathy and food. AJ

The Girls' Gang

Rose Impey, Lions,
0 00 672878 2, £2.25



Energetic, almost comic book style of adventures with the girls' gang getting their revenge on awful boys and some conventional versions of the female. It's set in fourth-year Juniors, it will remind lots of readers of what school might be like, it's fun, easy to read and there's a nice play at the end. 'St Georgina and the Dragon' allows the girls to play their five anti-stereotype parts (including Dr Her) and get their revenge on Ralph Raven as the dragon. AJ

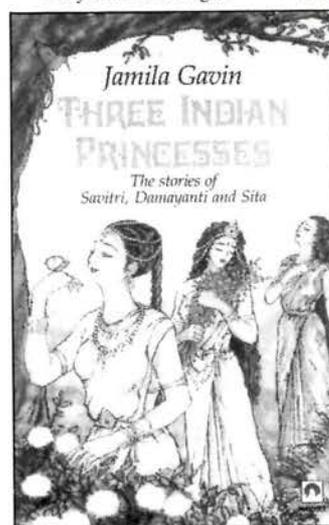
Bang! Bang! You're Dead

Ian Strachan, Magnet,
0 416 13192 1, £1.99

This tense, fast-moving, short thriller might make an acceptable early class-reader. There are plenty of cliff-hanging moments and high spots to make for easy serialisation and to keep interest going.

Little did Tim know when he spied on the stranger in the

street that the same man would be in Tim's house one night brandishing a loaded gun and keeping Tim and sister Sue captive. Revelation follows revelation and loyalties become confused as the pair battle with a determined, desperate criminal, who has more hold over them than they at first thought. DB



Three Indian Princesses

Jamila Gavin, Magnet,
0 416 13112 3, £1.99

The title and cover alone will probably restrict readership to girls, which is a pity because there are a few heroic princes and fearsome demon-gods in evidence too, which ought to take the boys' fancy.

These Indian folk stories of Savitri, Damayanti and Sita are told in a cosy accessible style and all the well-tried ingredients such as magic, virtue rewarded, revengers getting their come-uppance and benign animals are in place to make it a novel and enjoyable addition to any class library for the pleasure of young readers, whatever their cultural background. DB

How's Business

Alison Prince, Piper,
0 330 30485 2, £2.50

This friendly little book was written as a result of Alison Prince's long-term residency at a Lincolnshire primary school. How is the main character, evacuated from

London to Lincolnshire to escape the Blitz. At first he resents his enforced move to the countryside and his aunt and uncle's house – complete with faintly antagonistic cousin. The situation becomes acceptable when he passes a dangerous initiation test set by the local boys, befriends Anna Rose – an ostracised German refugee – and manages to resume his buying and selling activities amongst his peers.



When his mother's letters stop arriving, How makes the arduous and risky journey to London alone to find out what has happened and this occupies a large part of the book. This story will delight top juniors – and teach them a good deal about loyalties and relationships, too.

VR

The Vampire's Revenge

Eric Morecambe, ill.
Tony Ross, Magnet,
0 416 47180 3, £1.99

Vernon, a sadistic vampire, escapes from a spell of petrification and returns to his old haunts in Kathchem-by-the-Throat to wreak murderous vengeance on his family and fellow citizens. The subsequent machinations involve an invisible man, a transmuted one-eyed hunchback called Igon, and a werewolf who turns into a selection of Australian mammals.

The tendency to cram a gag into every other line rapidly clogs the plot and, as befits a book which relies so heavily on graveyard humour, the jokes are rotten and the writing rigid. The book should appeal to all those upper juniors who are entertained by funny foreign accents and the mockery of the deaf.

GH

Son of a Gun

Janet and Allan
Ahlberg, Puffin,
0 14 03.2810 6, £1.75

This Wild West parody was first published ten years ago. The Slocum Boys, a pair of mean and not too intelligent varmints, besiege Mrs Osgood Cabel Gains and her baby in their cabin at Benson's Bend while her husband the sheriff is out misdirecting his posse. The hero is eight-year-old Amos Gains, who escapes from the cabin and musters a

rescue party comprising a couple of old-timers, a mountain man, a troupe of dancing girls, a division of US cavalry, and a band of Choctaws under the polyglot Chief Afraid-of-his-Mother.

This is a rambling romp of a book, told in the meandering drawl of a campfire yarn, with perhaps a little more rambling than is justified by the romp. It has great potential as a read-aloud and is warmly recommended to children and adults who don't mind seeing a happy ending come galloping over the horizon half way through the action. The story is illustrated with splendid miniature portraits and a very useful map.

GH

Beware, This House is Haunted!

Lance Salway, ill. Terry
McKenna, Hippo,
0 590 85876 9, £1.95

Jessica and Lizzie are enduring a rain-sodden holiday in a Cornish cottage with their mother, step-father and inimical step-brothers, when the monotony is broken by the appearance of ghostly, threatening notes on the bulletin board. The children decide to challenge the supernatural messenger, who materialises as Beryl, a fractious schoolgirl who is still in a bad mood after her fatal road accident 62 years ago. The children attempt to befriend Beryl, and the narrative enters an ominously bland phase until they go one disastrous step too far in their



efforts to mollify her.

The touches of horror in this smoothly written domestic drama suggest that the book might satisfy older children in search of a moderately chilling tale. Seekers of a seriously troubled sleep will, however, be disappointed.

GH

Moondream

Victor Osborne, ill.
Paul Warren, Piper,
0 330 30673 5, £2.25

This book presents a brisk tour of recurrent motifs in fantasy writing for children. There is a nocturnal sky voyage in which a boy, assisted by kindly animals, seeks to rescue a girl kidnapped by monsters. There is an infernal castle in which the power of an evil wizard is centred. Lion, badger and owl are good; tramp, toad and alligator are bad. The narrative proceeds in an orderly manner from an initial nightmare, through sundry set-piece escapades, to the triumph of good over evil before morning.

The book is as stylised as a limerick, but offers enough in the way of well-paced incident and imagery to sustain the interest of junior lovers of romantic fantasy.

GH

Middle/Secondary

A Little Lower than the Angels

Geraldine McCaughrean,
Puffin, 0 14 03.2818 1,
£1.99

This is a marvellous book: rich, evocative, thought-provoking and – an added bonus – immensely readable. Young Gabriel, apprenticed to a bullying stonemason, can endure no more of his cruel treatment and flees to hide, unwittingly, amongst the props of a group of travelling Mystery players.

It is the Middle Ages and each town has its Guildsmen to perform the annual Mystery play on Corpus Christi. Gabriel's new friends, as year-round players, challenge this tradition. They are headed by two very different personalities – Lucier, French-born and passionate about the preservation of the plays, and Garvey, outwardly benign but unscrupulous and cunning. Gabriel's naivety provides the humour, an ugly alliance between Garvey and the stonemason the tension, Lucier's illness and increasingly close relationship with Gabriel the poignancy.

Buy this as a first-year text, then lead children through Doherty's *Children of Winter* and later, Paton Walsh's *A Parcel of Patterns* – there's all the literary heritage Kingman could wish for!

VR



The Serpent of Senargad

Fay Sampson,
Lion Publishing,
0 7459 1520 5, £1.99

Fay Sampson has already shown herself to be a writer of great invention and power, and this, the fifth of the Pangur Ban stories, will keep devotees content. New readers, as so often with fantasy, may find the names and style harder to adjust to, but with a whole succession of wonderfully independent and strong female characters, some great scenes of action and solid fantasy, this is worth persevering with.

AJ

Hauntings 6: The Bone-Dog

Susan Price,
0 590 76073 4

Hauntings 7: All on a Winter's Day

Lisa Taylor,
0 590 85870 X
Hippo, £1.95 each

The series should cater for that large group of children who are so fascinated by the strange and ghostly, and these two show the enormous range possible within the genre. Susan Price is always worth reading and here she has a strongly realistic story about Sarah spending a holiday with



no-nonsense Gran and Uncle. Out of a very ordinary world the strange story slowly emerges. Uncle Bryan has special powers, as does Granny, and makes Sarah a pet out of a fox stole. This responds to Sarah's direct commands and then begins to respond to her unexpressed anger. It's satisfyingly horrifying and realistic too. Lisa Taylor's story is much

harder to get into. It's strange from the moment that Lucy and Hugh wake up to find mother gone, everything changed and ghostly figures in occupation. It's intense and, by the end, engrossing with a lovely twist in the final pages. **AJ**

The Dark Shadow

Mary Rhind, Canongate Kelpies, 0 86241 253 6, £1.95

Set in sixteenth-century Scotland at the time of the Reformation. That's ambitious perhaps but the story follows well-known patterns. Davie takes his blind sister Lizzie to St Triduana's sacred well, hoping for a cure, against the wishes of their step-father who is a follower of Knox. With riots and piracy this is good adventure stuff with boys being brave and girls being saved. While keeping a firm control of geographical and historical fact, the author chooses modernisms such as 'Crums' at a moment of high drama! **AJ**

Hanky Panky

Roger Collinson, Puffin, 0 14 03.2659 6, £1.99

Nasty goings-on in a Southend comprehensive, which seems to have an abundance of nasty little worms, most notable of which is 'The Blob'. When he gets shut out of the changing rooms minus his clothes a web of intrigue and skulduggery is set in train involving pupils, staff and caretakers alike.

It makes very funny, compelling reading but some of the spiky verbal wit might be lost on all but the brightest, most sophisticated readers. My department and I appreciated it!! **DB**

Alpha Centauri

Robert Siegel, Lion Publishing, 0 7459 1602 3, £2.25

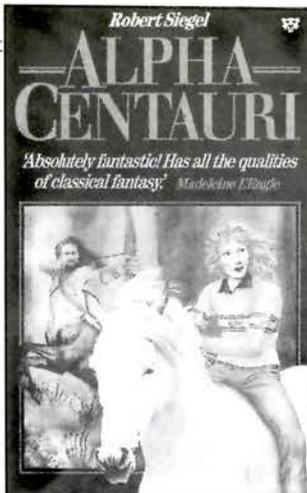
Fantasy readers of my acquaintance like books to be long and involved so this one ought to prove popular. After a short American version of modern English country life, the heroine, Becky, gets whisked back to very ancient Kent where, by magic, mystery, bloodshed and mysticism, she manages to fulfil the statutory prophesy and save the centaurs for a future time when we'll most need them. At the moment they're in peril from the Rock Movers – early McAlpine. It's a good yarn, fast-moving and vividly realised. I had a job putting it down after the homespun and broth start. **DB**

Dream House

Jan Mark, Puffin, 0 14 03.1589 6, £1.99

I usually enjoy Jan Mark's books but found this a bit disappointing. The plot seemed a bit over-stretched and the humour a bit flat, despite extravagant, contrary claims on the cover.

Hannah's involvement with West Stening Manor, a centre for arty short courses, is based on her dreamy love of the building, not its shifting human population. Her friend Dina on the other hand is besotted and bedazzled by its celebrity tutors. The dream tarnishes when she meets TV star Martin Carter and his brat daughter, Julia. Their short involvement and the squabbles between the three girls shows Dina how wrong she is to think that because you are famous you aren't prone to the usual, ordinary human failings. **DB**



The House on the Hill

Eileen Dunlop, Canongate Kelpies, 0 86241 244 7, £1.95

Another respectable offering from Kelpie paperbacks – a series well worth investigation. Philip Gilmore is horrified to learn that he is to live, temporarily, with his 'stuck-up' spinster Aunt Jane and his cousin Susan, product of a 'posh' school. He goes reluctantly and his churlish behaviour swiftly antagonises his cousin and saddens his introspective, gentle aunt.

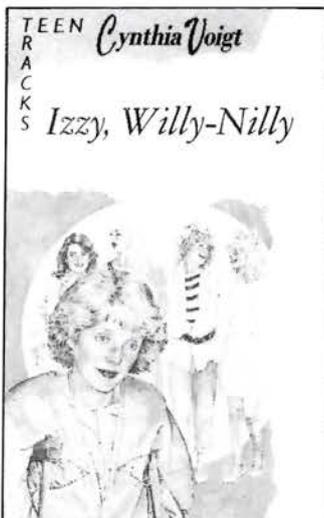
An empty room, with a ghostly nocturnal 'guest' who switches on non-existent lights, draws Philip and Susan into a convoluted family history in which he learns much about himself that he does not like. His reformed behaviour, Aunt Jane's newly-discovered happiness and the belated conclusion to a family mystery begun 50 years earlier, provide an engaging and well-paced story with a chilling climax. First and second-years will enjoy this hugely; make sure it's on your library or classroom shelf. **VR**

Will the Real Gertrude Hollings Please Stand Up?

Sheila Greenwald, ill. Thelma Lambert, Puffin, 0 14 03.2875 0, £1.99

This story is set in Manhattan where the school system has labelled Gertrude Hollings 'learning disabled' because she finds indulgence in imagination games preferable to struggling with the arbitrary symbolism of classroom workbooks. When Gertrude's parents take off on a business trip, she is forced to stay with her cousin Albert, an obnoxiously smart child who has been reduced to a tic-ridden complex of scholastic achievements by his pathologically pushy parents. In spite of the counselling inflicted on Gertrude by her classmate Jessica, a precocious career woman with an authentic line in psychobabble, the visit goes drastically wrong, and Albert's academic certainties are charred in the fire of Gertrude's imagination. Leaving aside a suspiciously neat ending, this is a thought-provoking book which acknowledges the therapeutic value of fantasy. It largely avoids simplistic commentary on constructs like 'dyslexia', and suggests that one of the main differences between achievers and non-achievers lies in the social acceptability of their respective illusions. The book would provide a good starting point for discussion among older pupils. Some of the details of middle-class behaviour in Manhattan may sound like life on Mars to British readers, but this could add to the charm of a very interesting story. **GH**

Older Readers



Izzy, Willy-Nilly

Cynthia Voigt, Lions Teen Tracks, 0 00 673377 8, £2.50

'I couldn't think of what to do with my life, what to want to

do, because all the things I wanted to do required normal people – and I wasn't normal any more. I was abnormal.'

When Izzy's drunken boyfriend wraps them and his car around a tree, the girl is the one whose scars are so obviously physical as well as mental – she loses a leg. Adjustment is slow and with it comes the need to take a complete stock of her relationships so far, especially with her so-called three best friends. Cynthia Voigt's sensitive, revealing account of Izzy's struggle to find re-acceptance in her family and social life and a self-acceptance of her disability makes this a satisfying and worthwhile read. **DB**

So Far to Go

Rhodri Jones, Canongate Kelpies, 0 86241 249 8, £1.95

Social realism novels? This one takes some beating – older

brothers sent down for stealing and drug-trafficking, sisters on the game, all and sundry on the dole, graffiti-daubed council estates, racial prejudice, gang warfare, biased policemen, the North/South divide, self-interested council officials; thank goodness there's a secret garden where Ian can escape, find a kind of fulfilment and a hope for the future. Upping sticks from Glasgow to London might work out after all. Dialects might deter, but those who relish a good wallow in social injustice will warm to it. **DB**

Run With the Hare

Linda Newbery, Armada, 0 00 692960 5, £1.95

Don't be deterred by the cover, which promises 'a heartrending contemporary story' – this is no Barbara Cartland in disguise! It's the story of Elaine's involvement

with the activities of a local animal rights group.

Elaine's reason for joining the group is largely to get to know Mark – aloof, handsome, intelligent – not a promising beginning, you may think! Don't despair – the story develops well as Elaine becomes involved with the group, most notably in sabotaging a particularly nasty organised dog fight, and her infatuation with Mark subsides as she becomes aware of his egocentricity and shallowness.

The book is strongly written, without the evangelical overtones which too often weaken the genre. The male characters are rather stereotyped and the language occasionally over-emotive – 'dangling naked turkeys and . . . slabs of cold animal flesh' – but third, fourth and fifth-years will find this an intelligent and thought-provoking read. **VR**

Urn Burial

Robert Westall, Penguin Plus, 0 14 03.2266 3, £1.99

Westall plunges straight into the mystery – what is the creature buried in the perspex coffin inside the hillside cairn? The calm of the meticulously described rural community is from the start belied by this discovery. Change is unwelcome in Unthank – change in the landscape, in lifestyle or in attitude. Soon, however, the community becomes a battlefield as interstellar forces – good and evil – struggle for domination of the world. Unthank as microcosm, Ralph as catalyst; world survival the prize?

The tension of Westall's writing is cleverly counterbalanced by the rhythms of rural village life and Ralph's moral dilemma about the part his curiosity played in the unleashing of the opposing forces is the more realistic for this convincing backdrop. The denouement is not so readily acceptable – well-crafted though it is, the spectacle of Ralph suddenly with 'the power to conquer the universe' defies belief. The flaw in this book is not its premise – that senseless violence, born of arrogance, is the seemingly irresistible source of our own destruction – but in its seduction by its own descriptive powers. Nevertheless, often a fine, challenging read for third or fourth-years – perhaps best used as a small set for wider reading as a worthwhile addition to a Westall collection. VR

Sons from Afar

Cynthia Voigt, Teen Tracks, 0 00 673367 0, £2.50

The Tillermans again – this time with Dacey at college and James increasingly determined to trace the father he never knew. His dissatisfaction with himself stimulates him to try to discover what he can of his intellectual and emotional inheritance in an effort to explain what he sees as his failure to communicate, his tendency to hide behind his desire to succeed – which, in itself, is a subterfuge.

When his younger brother Sammy joins his search they discover – through disappointment, frustration and danger – far more about themselves than about their father. Indeed, his elusiveness becomes necessary – without firm knowledge James has to rely on his own resources to overcome his emotional frailties.

The book, though crafted in Voigt's superbly inimitable style, is rather daunting in its introspection and likely to deter younger or less able readers who prefer the emphasis to be on action. Its subtle and exhaustive analysis of character places it in the wider reading component of GCSE Literature. VR

Deathwatch

Robb White, Penguin Plus, 0 14 03.2881 5, £2.50

What begins as a hunting trip into the desert becomes a man-hunt. Ben, the young guide, is forced to fight for his life by the ruthless businessman Madec who has shot an old prospector, probably in error, but now frames it to look like Ben's action and then forces him to strip and try to make his way out of the desert. An almost continuous tension right through to the twists of the ending. Until it becomes a film, copies in bookboxes and the library will keep pupils happy. AJ

Frankie's Story

Catherine Sefton, Methuen Teens, 0 416 13102 6, £1.99

This second part of the trilogy begun by *Starry Night* (the final part is out in hardback now) shifts the focus to a Republican housing estate in a small town. It catches the everyday realities which are both the ordinary and the awful. When Frankie, caught in the break-up of her parents, finds herself caught in the wild rumours of sectarian gossip, the grim and violent undercurrents are felt in terrifying detail. It's an excellent, very moving book which would make a very good companion for *Under Goliath* (Peter Carter) in those schools where that is used with whole classes. It should be available for all pupils and when the whole trilogy is in paperback many readers will catch the full force of Martin Waddell's (Catherine Sefton) achievement. AJ

Battlefields

Richard Severy, Magnet, 0 416 10202 6, £1.99

'Do not be troubled, God, though they say "mine" of all things that permit it patiently. They are like wind that lightly strokes the boughs and says MY tree.' (Rainer Maria Rilke)

It is Captain Packham's obsession with owning all around him – house, land, estate workers – which leads to a paralysing accident witnessed only by Jerry, whose father is in Packham's employ. This incident is the climax of a book whose undoubted strength centres on the enormously appealing characters of Jerry and his dog, Roly.

Colonel Packham's house, *Battlefields*, is named after the site of a Civil War conflict. It gives the book its title, the reader an indication of the open hostility between Jerry and Packham and demonstrates that principles cannot always be overridden by cruelty, however pathological its nature.

We own nothing; everything is merely 'put here for us to take



care of and pass on'. Thoreau is alive, well and living in *Battlefields*. Third-years – probably boys – would find this stimulatingly different, often engagingly humorous and, incidentally, a suitable companion to Susan Hill's *I'm the King of the Castle* for its themes of cruelty and persecution. VR

Just How Far?

Barbara Jacobs, Corgi Freeway, 0 552 52474 3, £1.99

I read and enjoyed *Stick* and this latest offering from Barbara Jacobs has much of the same sharply observed teenage behaviour, with a stimulating variety of thoughtfully drawn characters.

Megan and Bel accept a challenge from Terry, Bel's boyfriend, to get from Liverpool to Scotland on five pounds each. Bel merely wants to impress but Megan needs to salvage her pride and get her revenge on Terry, after losing him to Bel. During the trip, Megan meets Michael, an American medical student with inadequacies of his own to overcome. Megan salvages her self-esteem and Michael comes to terms with his doubts – they end up together. This is the least convincing section of the book, where the dialogue wallows into sentimentality on occasions. This reservation aside, third and fourth-year girls will, I'm sure, be entertained – and, perhaps, reassured – by *Just How Far?*. VR

The Guilty Party

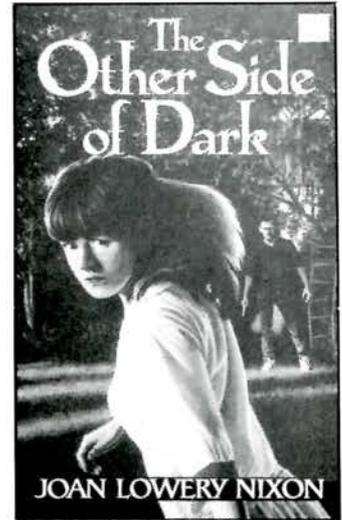
Joan Lingard, Penguin Plus, 0 14 03.2502 6, £2.25

Another of Joan Lingard's fiery heroines here, fighting for a cause she believes in. It's not Sadie, this time, trying to overcome the senseless divide in Northern Ireland but Jodie, determined to prevent the opening of a nuclear power plant in her town. She campaigns vigorously, finally deciding to go to prison rather than quietly pay the fine a charge of obstruction has brought her.

The issue of principles versus

politics is a compelling and important one, but often inaccessible to teenagers. The brisk pace of the plot, allied with Lingard's no-nonsense approach to dialogue, gives an immediacy which is refreshing. There are no formulae here, no easy solutions, but a determined and level-headed attempt to explore and expose controversial issues – nuclear power, treatment of prisoners by police and prison service and, above all, an examination of the difficulties strong personal convictions can cause in relationships.

This book should be made available to third-years upwards – it instructs, informs and engrosses the reader in a most acceptable way. VR



The Other Side of Dark

Joan Lowery Nixon, Lightning, 0 340 49167 1, £2.25

17-year-old Stacy McAdams wakes after four years in a coma to discover that her mother was killed by the same man who shot her. The futility of her mother's death angers Stacy into probing her dead memory for the face of the murderer. Nixon attempts to weave into the simplicity of the plot the inevitable emotional adjustments which Stacy has to make after her four-year 'sleep'.

The stage is set for Nixon to deliver her usual efficient and entertaining package – but on this occasion she fails to convince. The storyline is acceptable and the pace encouragingly brisk but emotional trauma is portrayed merely by constant repetition of the problems and too many of the characters are similarly one-dimensional. Stacy's high school friends alternate between clumsy condescension and insensitive curiosity; charismatic Jeff – with whom Stacy falls in love – reveals himself as an undercover agent in a narcotics squad in an ending which is frustrating in its vacuity. 13-15 year old Nixon fans will probably want to read this book – but only on the strength of the last. VR

Authorgraph No. 57

Roger McGough

Roger McGough's house is exactly what you'd expect: thin, not as tall as it looks, arty inside without making a show of it and with its charm and quiriness kept carefully under wraps as if to allow you any space that's going. Very much like Roger himself, in fact. It's also part of a terrace that has one of London's most famous street markets at its far end – a townie's house. Now that *is* Roger:

'Summertime's great (except for the sun) Holly and Mistletoe make my nose run Autumn leaves and I swoon it's no fun Having hay fever all the year round.'

Hence the back yard turned into a conservatory (plant-less) and a small sitting-out area at chimney-pot level noticeably lacking in leafiness. When Roger wants to get away from it all, he makes for the sea not the country. And that, too, is an aspect which goes deep:

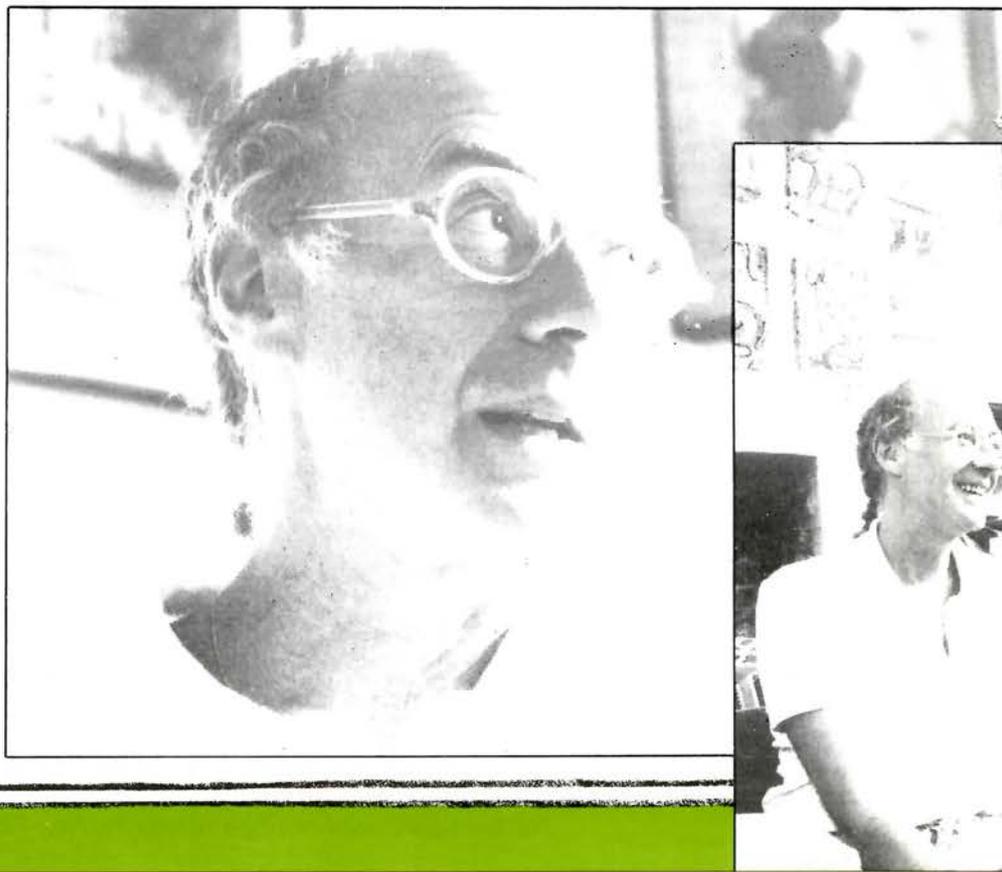
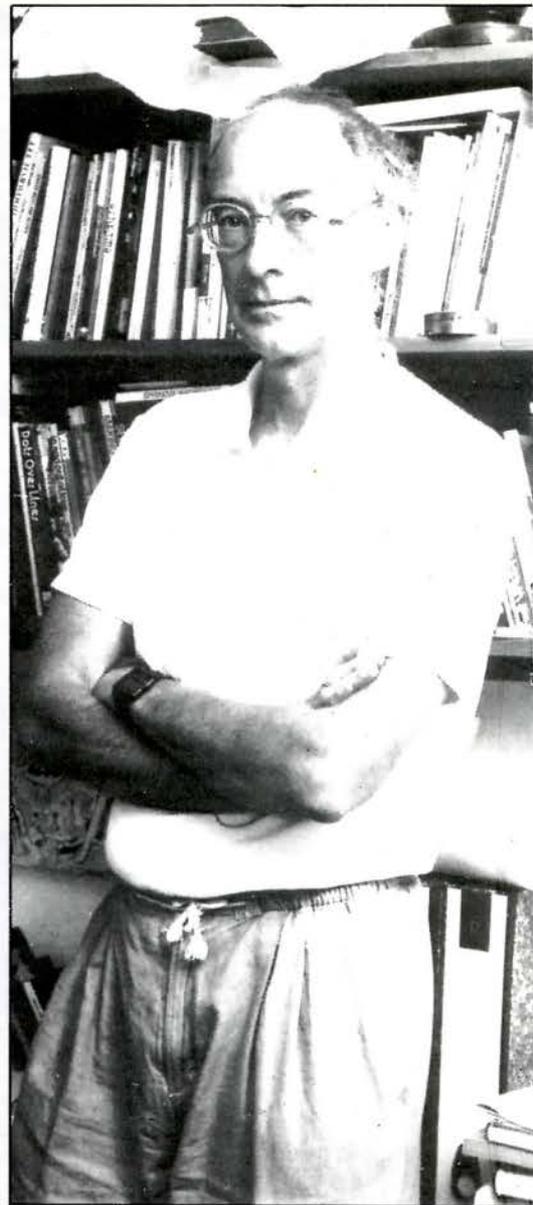
'In my bedroom at night I used to lie in bed (best place to lie really), I used to lie there, especially in winter, and listen to the foghorns being sounded all down the river. I could picture the ship moving its way out of the docks into the channel and out into the Irish Sea. It was exciting. All those exotic places. All those exciting adventures.'

This comes from his collection of short stories, **The Stowaways**, which draws heavily on his own childhood on Merseyside. 'The sea was always there – it represented the Great Escape. People were always coming and going for one reason or another. Mainly, though, because it was war-time. Until I was about nine I thought that the difference between men and women was that the men wore uniform. My father worked on the docks and was one of those generations of men who were frightened of books. My mother quite liked them in a Mazo de la Roche kind of way but we weren't at all literary at home. Like most working-class parents they saw education as a chance to improve yourself – to get on

in life which meant getting away from Liverpool. People often ask me now why I left the place. The interesting question for me is why I stayed so long!'

For a poet, his schooling was oddly un-literary too. 'St Mary's was a standard grammar school of the time – the arts down-graded in favour of more *serious* subjects and the staff firmly convinced that the best teaching method was carrot and stick . . . without the carrot. I learned French and Latin with an Irish accent – and had a year of Gaelic because the English master didn't like English very much. None of this bothered me particularly. I looked bookish because I wore glasses but wasn't at all bookish really. I enjoyed being out and about with my mates.'

In fact, he failed Literature at O-Level. Somehow his preferred reading as a youngster – of **The Wizard**, **Hotspur**, **Adventure** and **The Rover** – failed to compensate for not studying the set-books. 'The only literature that meant anything to me when I was growing up, except for the rhymes and verses my mother used to sing me as a toddler, was the Choral Verse we were encouraged to learn to improve our elocution. I was good at this. I got a grade B in a public competition reciting



'Jabberwocky' once.' Such triumphs apart, 'any artistic ability didn't show in my school work at all.'

He went on to read French and Geography at the University of Hull. Why French and Geography? 'Because those were my top marks at A-Level.' Why Hull? 'Because it was near the sea and close-ish to home. Going to Exeter, say, would have been like taking a trip up the Amazon. Besides I fancied the blue-and-gold scarf.'

Ah, yes. But wasn't Hull also the workplace of rather a well-known poet called Philip Larkin? 'That's true. He was actually sub-warden of my Hall of Residence. But I didn't talk to him much. I wouldn't have known what to say. At the time I found contemporary poetry very daunting. To write it, I felt you had to be travelled and widely-read and put in a lot of classical references.' Nevertheless, it was at Hull that the literary bug finally bit – through French verse rather than English. It was Rimbaud and Baudelaire who inspired him. 'I remember one night when I just started writing . . . right through till dawn and into the following day. It was a great outpouring to do with discovering myself – not very good but *passionate*. I decided there and then that whatever job I actually did, that was what I was: a poet.'

But a job he still had to have. So, fortified by the poems he'd published in a student newspaper and by the encouragement he'd received when he finally managed to approach Philip Larkin, Roger entered the stick-and-carrot trade. To his surprise he greatly enjoyed teaching – first at a Kirby comprehensive school, then an F.E. college in Liverpool.

Liverpool? The place from which everyone wanted to escape? Not any more. In the city centre, which he'd hardly visited as a child, things were happening. The clubs and pubs were alive with the sound of rock music . . . and poetry. Along with his mates Brian Patten and Adrian Henry, Roger was soon part of that astonishing Scene that still seems synonymous with the sixties. As an offshoot from his poems, he began writing dialogue and Pinteresque sketches for a group that included John Gorman and Michael McCartney, whose brother Paul had also begun to do rather well. The group rapidly acquired a student following, visited the Edinburgh Festival, were taken up by local TV and finally, as 'The Scaffold', 'found we'd become famous'. With Brian Epstein as their manager, wild years followed – especially after what Roger calls 'our white suit period' when songs like 'Thank you very much' and 'Lily the Pink' had converted their student audience into a national and even international one. 'I'd be doing gigs with Jimi Hendrix and Elton John, meeting Bob Dylan, writing the script for 'The Yellow Submarine', rushing off to places like Milan on Friday, Huddersfield on Saturday, somewhere in Belgium on Monday, and it never occurred to me to stop over anywhere and take a look. We were always rushing off to the next engagement.'



Of course, the money was good. 'A bit better than I got as a teacher,' he says and nods at a watercolour on his sitting-room wall. It's a picture of the small mansion, like a miniature stately home, he owned during this period. 'Mind you, most of it vanished by the usual routes – you give away everything or sign it away to record companies and managements. It's surprising how little there is left.'

Not that this seems to bother him over-much. While all this was going on, he was still working at his poetry both as writer and performer. 'I suppose the fame helped in a way – but it's a bit double-edged. In some ways it was actually a hindrance because I tended to be regarded as a sort of pop-star with pretensions. People kept saying, "I believe your hobby is writing poetry," that kind of thing.' By 1967 his 'hobby' had already led to **Summer with Monica**, his first collection of verse to be published, quickly followed by **The Mersey Sound**, **The Liverpool Scene** and seven other books of poetry to date. For adults, that is. So at what point did he start writing for children?

It's a question he can't answer. 'Because I'm not sure I ever did start – at any rate consciously. It's just that all of my poetry is intended for the widest possible audience and some of it seems to be okay for kids.' This, for instance:

*'The cord of my new dressing-gown
he helps me tie*

*Then on to my father's shoulder
held high*

*The world at night with my little eye
I spy*

*The moon close enough to touch
I try*

*Unheard of silver elephants have
learned
to fly*

*Giants fence with searchlights
in the sky*

*Too soon into the magic shelter
he and I*

*Air raids are so much fun
I wonder why*

*In the bunk below, a big boy
starts to cry.'*

Is 'My Little Eye' for children or adults? Well, it first appeared in his adult collection **Melting into the Foreground** (Viking 1986) but there seems no reason at all why children shouldn't share it. It's at least as accessible as the work of Geoffrey Trease, Robert Westall, Michelle Magorian or other prose-chroniclers of World War II for children.

Of course, over the last decade or so, he has become much more aware of children as a potential audience for his verse. 'In the mid-seventies when I was on the run from the road and a broken marriage, I took a fellowship in Creative Writing at Loughborough University. This was a sort of refuge,

an oasis. The playfulness of poems like 'Mr Noselighter', which was suggested by my son Finn, came very much as a relief.' This playfulness, picked up by Kestrel in books like his collection **You Tell Me** with Michael Rosen and later the magnificent **Sky in the Pie**, rapidly established him as a favourite with teachers and, more importantly, their pupils. 'My work for children is all about words and playing with words – there's a fun element I enjoy enormously. Also kids respond so warmly. There's none of the backbiting and savagery you have to put up with when writing for the adult theatre, say, when your work can play to a packed house and still get a killing review.'

So, whether it's newly written or re-cycled from his adult verse, there's bound to be more McGough for children on the way. His sons Finn (18) and Tom (16) are on the college/GCSE trail now but his marriage to Hilary, a television producer of science programmes, has brought him a new source of inspiration: son Mattie, aged two. As always, his future poems will be written longhand, in ink, across the pages of a big, bound ledger – usually kept in the large, sunny room at the top of his house where he works at odd moments during the day. For the distractions don't get any less. We caught him between trips to Germany and Spain, his poetry readings are as popular as ever, he's much in demand for conferences and literary awards, and soon begins work on a film script of **Peter Rabbit** with the company that made **The Snowman** cartoon. Mattie needn't worry, though:

*'The Writer of this poem
Never ceases to amaze
He's one in a million, billion
(or so the poem says!).'*

Roger McGough was interviewed by Chris Powling.

Photographs by Richard Mewton.

The Books

(published in hardback by Viking Kestrel and in paperback by Puffin unless otherwise indicated)

The Great Smile Robbery, 0 670 80021 X, £5.50; 0 14 03.1437 7, £1.50 pbk

An Imaginary Menagerie, 0 670 82330 9, £6.95

The Kingfisher Book of Comic Verse (ed.), Kingfisher, 0 86272 217 9, £6.95

Nailing the Shadow, 0 670 81801 1, £6.95; 0 14 03.2390 2, pbk (summer 1989)

Noah's Ark, with Ljiljana Rylands, Picture Lions, 0 00 663068 5, £0.00 pbk

Sky in the Pie, 0 670 81795 3, £5.95; 0 14 03.1612 4, £1.99 pbk

The Stowaways, 0 670 80135 6, £4.50; 0 14 03.1649 3, £1.75 pbk

Strictly Private (ed.), 0 670 80019 8, £7.50; 0 14 03.2831 9, £2.50 pbk

You Tell Me, with Michael Rosen, 0 7226 5548 7, £5.95; 0 14 03.1286 2, £1.75 pbk

Counting Book, 0 670 82671 5, £6.95 (October 1989)

Helen Highwater, £5.95 (October 1989)

REVIEWS – Non Fiction

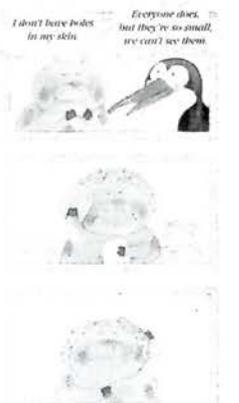
Why do soap and water make you clean?

Skin is oily. The oil comes out of tiny holes in your skin, called pores. The oil keeps your skin soft and healthy. But sometimes dirt sticks to the oil.

Dry soap won't take off the oily dirt.

Water alone won't wash off the oily dirt, either.

I don't have holes in my skin. Everyone does, but they're so small, we can't see them.



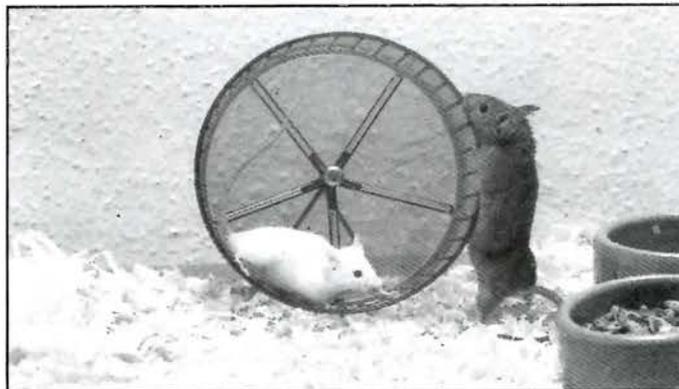
But, when soap and water get together, the soapy water dissolves the oil and makes the dirt slide right off your skin.



Splash! - all about baths

Susan Kovacs Buxbaum and Rita Golden Gelman, ill. Maryann Cocca-Leffler, Hodder & Stoughton, 0 340 430214, £5.95 (INFANT/JUNIOR)

It's healthy to have your prejudices overturned occasionally and **Splash!** has caused me immense well-being. Written by two unfamiliar but exotic names and illustrated by a third, preceded by heart-bestrewn dedications and featuring animals in a predominantly pink bathroom setting, the book creates a first impression of unmitigatedly foreign (no, worse, American) sopppiness. Read on, though, and it's a brilliant exposition of the more simple properties of fluids, the ones whose effects are important at plughole level. While Penguin prepares for a bath, his friends discover all sorts of attributes of aqueous matter. It's always container-shaped (a piglet sucks it up through a curly-tail straw), it wrinkles the skin (even on an elephant), things float or sink (even soap). Condensation and surface tension are succinctly explained – and how about this for Archimedes: 'Why does the water go up when you get in? Water takes up space. You take up space. You and the water can't be in the same space at the same time, so when you get in the bath the water moves up – and sometimes over.' Eureka! I have found a great book to share with four-and-ups, either in or out of the bath, and one whose gently humorous and utterly straightforward style will permit its enjoyable use with less able children up to 12. TP



Mice and Rats

1 85210 450 3

Guinea Pigs

1 85210 375 2

Anna and Michael Sproule, Wayland (Know Your Pet series), £6.95 each (JUNIOR/MIDDLE)

Prejudices get another kicking when we look at Wayland's Know Your Pet series. Statements like 'editorial planning by Jollands Editions' on the back of the title page breed suspicion right away. Will this be a series planned, designed and advised upon by a dozen or more consultants, but actually written by nobody?

Answer – no. Jollands have done an unobtrusive job and these are the Sproules' books. Written for the serious pet owner of 8-14, these two latest additions to the series provide a fine introduction, not only to the techniques of looking after their subjects, but to the responsibilities as well. The importance of routine – at least as important to the pet as to the owner – and of hygiene are very sensibly emphasised. For example, in **Mice and Rats** we find: 'If you have a cold or 'flu you should keep away from your pets until you get better . . . Ask a member of your family to look after them.' And then, wonderfully, **Guinea Pigs** actually suggests putting the old bedding and

droppings on the compost-heap (where it does a great job) rather than merely 'discarding it' like most books do – if they even get that far. The texts are skilfully simple and good for family sharing. 'Hard' words are boldly printed and explained in a glossary (where 'compost' comes up as 'dead vegetable matter left to rot', which is only the half of it!). Indexing is good, bibliographies are helpfully selective, and a thoroughly responsible approach, which puts the pets' welfare first, makes these extremely recommendable to the majority of pet-keeping families. At about a guinea over the price of one guinea pig, the price is on the high side, but the benefit and value are much greater. TP

Early People

0 86318 342 5

Mammal

0 86318 340 9

Steve Parker

Shell

0 86318 341 7

Alex Arthur
Dorling Kindersley
(Eyewitness Guides),
£6.95 each
(MIDDLE/SECONDARY)

With the re-emergence of the cricket season I realise again that however much I long to spend whole days at the

County Ground or tele-wise at Old Trafford or the Oval, the best I can probably manage is the recorded highlights. Not the real thing, but neither would they claim to be. Larger and brighter than life they are the game's late-night shop window.

Dorling Kindersley's Eyewitness Guides have the same effect on me – slick, technically great and, above all, productive of further interest. Superb photographs with touched-in shadows characterise and emphasise the realness of Eyewitness subjects, the texts fit where they touch and are individual enough to be convincingly authoritative. The books proceed spread by spread, introducing generalities and illustrating them by picturesque and copiously annotated illustrations. A picture like that of the 'exploded' lobster on pages 22-23 of **Shell** could hardly be bettered for explaining an articulated exoskeleton, and the apposition of a suit of armour behind the lobster's last right leg is not only natty layout but a positive information bonus – although why not choose a Cromwellian 'lobster-back' helmet, I wonder?

Superficiality abounds in this series (the 'salmon' illustrated in **Early People** is actually an oven-ready hatchery rainbow trout), but this is a small price to pay for a series of books that provably stimulates interest and provides delight, whether among ten-year-olds or adults. What Eyewitness Guides need, of course, are good follow-up bibliographies and this they haven't got; a pity, but this fleet seems set to sail on with a fair wind of a modest price, which could excuse the absence of a farthing's worth of tar. TP

There is a growing demand from schools for books on 'recent history' – books which portray life during a limited time-span, or which attempt to give the flavour of a decade. Publishers have responded with a number of series, from the trendsetting Macdonald History of the Modern World of the mid-seventies to these latest offerings.

The 1960s

0 86313 703 2

The 1970s

0 86313 702 4

Tim Healey, Franklin Watts (Picture History of the 20th Century series), £6.95 each (MIDDLE/SECONDARY)

These two are the pick of the bunch. Each book sets limited targets and meets them admirably. Texts are brief but

Armou

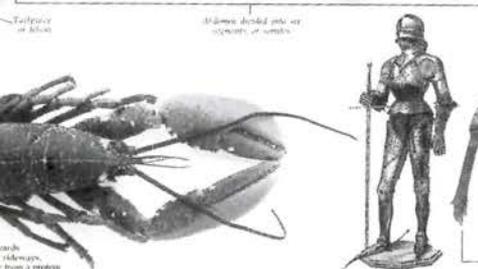
WHILE MANY C strong outer cat protect their sot evolved what is layer of skin. TI taccans, of whi types - includ mostly living in possess shells tl armour worn by the group know the various typ hav



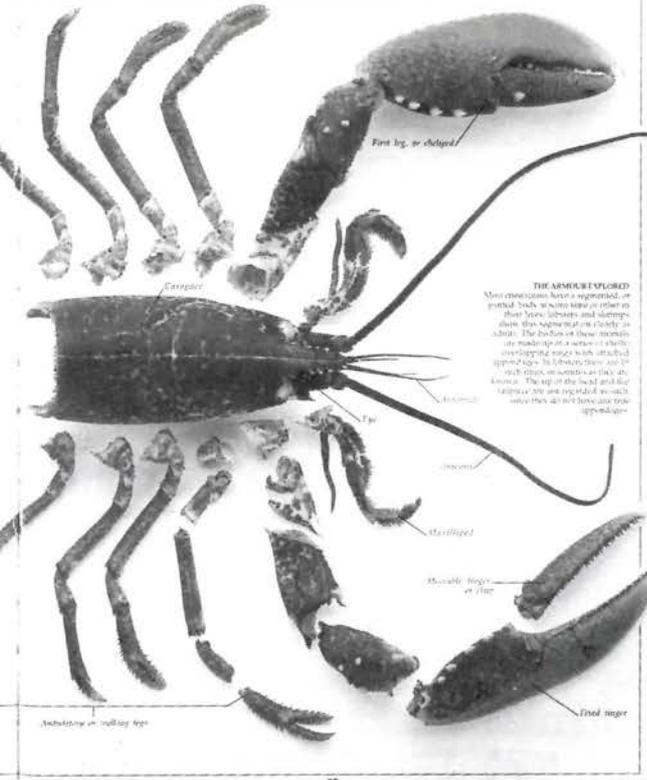
STRONG INTERACT The outer of the way in which the segments of it (it) are joined together. Lobster can only swing but it forward - it cannot in. The ability varies and it is caused by chitin, which is deposit of calcium salt. It cannot so move about in shell and grow a new and the lobster why to

-plated animals

FEATURES HAVE DEVELOPED wings that we call shells to inner parts, one group has more like a very hard and thick shell. A large group is called the crustaceans - there are over 30,000 different species - the lobsters, crabs, and crayfish of the sea. Most of the crustaceans are jointed - a bit like the suits of medieval knights. Until recently, the crustaceans were thought to belong to the arthropods - the largest group of living creatures - which includes all of insects. Nowadays, the crustaceans are considered by many experts to have evolved independently many millions of years ago, although there are many similarities between the two groups - including segmented bodies, jointed limbs, and the hardened outer skeleton, or shell, that is shed from time to time to allow the animal to grow.



CRUSTACEAN CASTING: Like the lobster, the knight's armor is made of overlapping plates of metal. The lobster's armor is made of overlapping plates of chitin. This makes it extremely vulnerable to predators. The knight's armor is made of overlapping plates of metal. This makes it extremely vulnerable to predators. The knight's armor is made of overlapping plates of metal. This makes it extremely vulnerable to predators.



THE ARMOUR EXPLORED: Most crustaceans have a segmented or jointed body. Each joint is either a shell or a jointed limb. The body of these insects is made up of a series of shells. The body of these insects is made up of a series of shells. The body of these insects is made up of a series of shells. The body of these insects is made up of a series of shells.

films and novels. Overall this series looks dull, with dim illustrations which hardly live up to the 'colourful picture of the decade' that is claimed in the publisher's blurb.

The Generation Gap
0 340 48317 2
Holidays
0 340 48318 0
John Aylett
In the Street
Paul Noble,
0 340 43127 X

Schools
Judith Crosher,
0 340 43128 8
Hodder & Stoughton
(A Century of Change series), £6.95 each
(JUNIOR/MIDDLE)

Intended for a younger audience, Hodder's series seeks to emulate the successful BBC Watch book **Then and Now** by contrasting modern social phenomena with those common earlier in the century. Emphasis is placed upon personal memories and anecdotes, with questions which are designed to actively involve the young reader and point to parallels and contrasts between past and present. However, the page layouts, multifarious typefaces and organisation of information on the page can sometimes confuse rather than illuminate. Content is variable - an admirable feature is the coverage of education for special children in **Schools**, but the series suffers from attempting to deal with issues too complex for the intended age range (such as the question of child safety in **The Generation Gap**). And there are occasional lapses into sloppy writing: 'When your grandparents were young they would not have had . . . kebabs or chop suey to eat. Regardless of cultural roots?'

The dangers of oversimplifying history, distorting it to fit into convenient blocks and page formats are apparent in all the above titles. Yet all three series will be seen as useful by schools. The Hodder books offer an opportunity for children to compare everyday life then and now, and serve an immediate educational need. The **Portrait of a Decade** allows the examination of an important event in a year, regardless of whether it was part of the decade's perceived trends. The Franklin Watts series offers most in its clarity and production standards and points the way forward for other publishers. GB

Ted Percy is a Divisional Children's Librarian with Buckinghamshire County Library.
Geoff Brown is a Divisional Coordinator with Hertfordshire Library Service.

From Shell.



ON LANDING • BERLIN WALL • SAN FRANCISCO • BOUTIQUE ART • CUBA • MARTIN LUTHER KING • THE MINI • APOLLO

From **The 1960s**.

clear, and emphasis is on illustration to create interest and retain attention. In **The 1960s** the significant world events are shown (Cuba, Vietnam, Independence) and supported by a detailed chronology, but the feel of the period is also recreated by the inclusion of the more ephemeral (Daleks, The Monkees and Bobby Moore holding the World Cup). **The 1970s** adopts the same approach with the vital alongside the quirky - references to the potato/tomato cross, the poisonous 'pomato', may have a particular appeal to some children. It is a telescoped and inevitably

superficial look at the decade, but a stimulating one which might encourage further exploration. GB

The 1920s
Betty Williams,
0 7134 5816 X

The 1970s
Elizabeth Campling,
0 7134 5988 3
Batsford (Portrait of a Decade series),
£8.95 each
(SECONDARY)
This series is much less concerned with visual appeal. Instead it considers the decade

year by year, through pseudo news reports of the time, highlighting a major event each year (e.g. '1921 - Irish Agreement'), with further reports on world events, science and technology, the arts and sport. **The 1920s** works reasonably effectively as items are given authenticity by support from contemporary illustration - advertising for Craven A cigarettes and all-wool combinations for 6/2d, press reports of the death of Valentino and the Wall Street crash. **The 1970s** does not make use of such material and suffers as a result. Nor does it consider its intended GCSE readership in the selection of adult highbrow

Under the Storyteller's Spell

Caribbean Folk Tales

Edited by Faustin Charles

Illustrated by Rosetta Woolf

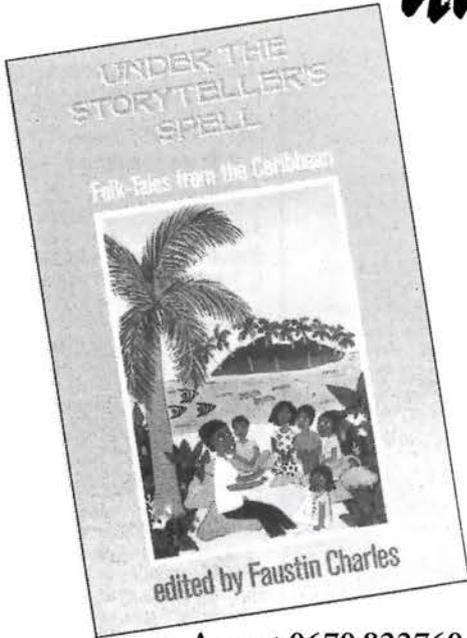
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- *The Times Educational Supplement*



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27 July 1989



LIFELINE 4: PROJECTS AND TOPICS

Pat Thomson concludes 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 7: MINIBEASTS

'Minibeasts' is a variable term when used in schools but generally means the invertebrates and amphibians in the early stages. As they are often used as a subject in the early teaching of science, the first section is devoted to this kind of text. The

books are then grouped loosely according to the habitat and characteristics of the minibeast. The fiction is arranged in ascending age in each section.

INFORMATION BOOKS

The study of invertebrates, or 'minibeasts', figures strongly in primary science schemes:

A First Look: science for 4-8 year olds, Cyril Gilbert and Peter Matthews, Oliver & Boyd 1982, 0 05 004148 7, £40.00. A science programme based on investigative activities, comprising teacher's notes and a resource pack of cards. There is a main card on 'Minibeasts' with cross-references to other cards, such as 'Pond Life', 'At Home in the Soil', as well as individual creatures, like 'Caterpillars'.

Minibeasts, Stages 1 and 2, Schools Council Science 5/13, Macdonald 1973 (1982), 0 356 04106 9, £4.99 non-net. Part of an invaluable series which moves comprehensively from objectives to bibliography, with plenty of practical activities in the middle. Good coverage of the subject as part of the science curriculum.

Learning Through Science: All Around, Schools Council, Macdonald 1982, 0 356 07553 2, £12.99 non-net. This series partners the Science 5/13 project and consists of a teacher's book and individual, coloured workcards. Relevant sections are 'School Safari', 'Look Under a Flowerpot', 'Life Style', 'Snailways', 'Pond Life' and 'Study One' (a minibeast, that is).

Science for Primary Schools, Book 1B, S F King, Ward Lock 1985, 0 7062 4533 4, £16.50 for pack of five. A practical series for which there are also teachers' books, pupils' books, extension activities and black line masters. The animal section includes earthworms and snails.

Science Workshop, Irene Finch, Longman 1981, 0 582 18348 0, o/p. Based on the BBC TV programmes. See 'Animals of the Soil' for observation, feeding and conservation. Additional references include a guide to the relevant Dewey numbers.

Look! Primary Science, Teacher's Guide A, Cyril Gilbert and Peter Matthews, Oliver & Boyd 1988, 0 05 004161 4, £9.50. Two packs of cards and a teacher's guide for two age ranges. This one is for 7-9 years; Pack B (0 05 004162 2, £9.50) is for 9-11. There is a large theoretical section on science policy, and then minibeasts appear in the first section, 'Ourselves, Animals and Plants'.

Science Horizons Level 2a: Looking at Animals, West Sussex Science 5-14, Macmillan Education 1982, 0 333 28535 2, £7.95. Sound introductory section for teachers, illustrated activities and information sheets. (Includes other animals as well as invertebrates.) Cross-curricular paths suggested.

Science Horizons Level 2b: Pond Life, West Sussex Science 5-14, Macmillan Education 1986, 0 333 34917 2, £7.95. Does the same job for watery minibeasts, including important points about preparing a visit to water. Divides into outdoor and classroom work, as well as by animal.

Books about particular minibeasts, grouped loosely by habitat and characteristics:

Life Under Stones, John B Free, A & C Black 1981, 0 7136 2121 4, o/p. Well photographed tour of all the common creatures found under stones. Paragraphs of text describe the main features of each in brief.

Earthworms, Terry Jennings, Oxford, 0 19 918256 6, £3.50; 0 19 918250 7, £1.95 pbk. Part of the 'Into Science' series, this works by asking questions, encouraging experiment and observation. Good photographs and notes for teachers.

The Life Cycle of a Snail, Jennifer Coldrey, Wayland 1989, 1 85210 123 7, £5.95. Illustrations rather than photographs and brief text. Intended as a first natural history book, there are suggestions for keeping snails at the back.

Snails and Slugs, Chris Henwood, Watts 1988, 0 86313 691 5, £5.50. Part of the 'Keeping Minibeasts' series so the emphasis is on catching, keeping and observing them. See also **Earthworms** (0 86313 692 3), **Frogs** (0 86313 693 1) and **Spiders** (0 86313 694 X). There is a note at the end of each about releasing the creatures.

The snails eat and grow.

Snails eat all kinds of plants. They like dead plants as well as juicy green leaves and soil. A snail's tongue is covered with thousands of tiny sharp teeth. As it rubs its tongue against a plant, it scrapes off tiny pieces of food into its mouth. As they eat more food, the young snails begin to grow.



From *The Life Cycle of a Snail*.

The Story of the Ant, John Paull, Ladybird 1980, 0 7214 0630 0, 99p. Concentrated text, photographs and diagrams. See also **The Story of the Spider**, 1980, 0 7214 0631 9.

Snails, Worms and Spiders, B Bornancin, Burke 1983, 0 222 00883 0, o/p. A business-like 'short course' on these creatures for upper juniors. Organised by habitat: in water, under stones, in the soil, plus spiders.

Spider's Web, Christine Back and Barrie Watts, A & C Black 1984, 0 7136 2428 0, £4.50. About the construction of the web and its function. Remarkable photographs, the spider like an amber jewel in the web.

Spiders, Lionel Bender, Watts 1988, 0 86313 759 8, £5.95. Concentrates on life cycle and fascinating snippets of unusual information. Identification chart and life-size drawings. Reminds us that there are many different spiders and some are endangered. The photographs made quite an impact in class!

Insects, Elizabeth Cooper, Macmillan Education 1988, 0 333 46641 1, £6.99. 'First Facts' series with large print. Double spread for each aspect. Would work best as a basis for discussion.

Insects, Gwen Allen and Joan Denslow, Oxford 1969, 0 19 918004 0, £3.95. Well ordered reference book, much reprinted. Encourages close observation. Illustrated in line for identification details and colour for the animal in context.

Beetles, Pat and Helen Clay, A & C Black 1983, 0 7136 2349 7, £4.50. The introduction deals with the common features and then individual studies of some familiar beetles follow, divided by characteristics, such as 'pests'.

The Silkworm Story, Jennifer Coldrey, Deutsch 1983, 0 233 97553 5, £3.95. Opens with an explanation of the discovery of sericulture and the process from egg to moth. The full story is then repeated in detailed photographs with explanatory captions.

Butterflies on my Mind, Dulcie Gray, Angus & Robertson 1978, 0 207 95804 1, o/p. A personally committed book with conservation in mind. Beautifully illustrated, and well-presented for top juniors.

The Butterfly in the Garden, Paul and Mary Whalley, Methuen 1987, 0 416 63860 0, o/s. Life cycle, habitat, feeding habits and enemies, including humans and their effect on the butterfly's environment.

Bumblebee, Bo Jarner, A & C Black 1988, 0 7136 2976 2, £4.50. Clear, simple account of a year in the life of a bumble-bee, from the making of the nest to the replacement of the old queen by the new. Exceptional photographs.

Bees, Ants and Termites, Marie Farre, Moonlight 1985, 1 85103 001 8, £3.50. Small handbook which concentrates on these social animals. Paragraph facts, informative illustrations.

Life of the Ladybird, Andreas and Heiderose Fischer-Nadel, Dent 1982, 0 460 06085 6, o/p. Picture book, but substantial text on the life cycle with explanatory close-up photographs.

Ladybird, Barrie Watts, A & C Black 1987, 0 7136 2856 1, £4.50. Text in simple sentences. Good photographs, augmented by line drawings of details.

Dragonfly, Barrie Watts, A & C Black 1988, 0 7136 3053 1, £4.50. Story of the dragonfly's life cycle, stage by stage. Full-page colour photograph on the right, explanation (not too much) on the left.

Discovering Damselflies and Dragonflies, Linda Losito, Wayland 1987, 1 85210 061 3, £5.95. Specialist concentration on the odonata, starting with the prehistoric record. Well-designed, text substantial but easy to read. The life cycle is illustrated with photographs which show some of the different types.

Picture Books

Mog's Box, Helen Nicoll and Jan Pienkowski, Heinemann, 0 434 95658 9, £5.95; Picture Puffin, 0 14 050.796 5, £2.25 pbk. Mog wants a lunch box - but did not particularly want a caterpillar for lunch.

Bye-Bye Fly!, Colin Robinson, Bodley Head, 0 370 31108 6, £5.50. Young picture book. Everyone tries to swat that fly, without success.

Leapfrog, William Mayne and Barbara Firth, Walker, 0 7445 0726 X, £5.95. The story, told in the present tense, is set in Tadpole Town. Good pictures of habitat and water creatures.

The Butterfly That Stamped, Rudyard Kipling and Alan Baker, Macmillan, 0 333 34137 6, £1.95; 0 333 38718 X, £1.75 pbk. As much colour in the language as the pictures in this 'Just So' story so plain versions are also useful.

The Dragonfly Over the Water, Christopher O'Toole, Methuen 1988, 0 416 06572 4, o/s. Fuller text, suitable for upper juniors, concentrating on the habitat. Other factors are covered, however, from breeding and defence to temperature control.

Frogs and Toads, Kate Petty, Watts 1985, 0 86313 314 2, o/p. Simplified, large print text, a picture for each point. A brief 'round up' of the main points is given at the back.

Birth of Toads, Elvig Hansen, Dent 1986, 0 460 06226 3, £5.50. A straightforward, descriptive narrative account of a year in the life of a toad, accompanied by stunning photographs.

Freshwater Animals, Gwen Allen and Joan Denslow, Oxford 1970 (1984), 0 19 918007 5, £3.95. 'Clue Book' series. Life cycle, observation tactics and descriptions of the animal in its habitat, plus the identification guide.

In the Pond, Miriam Moss, Macdonald 1989, 0 356 13454 7, £5.50; 0 356 13787 2, £2.99 pbk. A handbook packed with information about all the pond inhabitants. The insects are well-covered, especially in terms of metamorphosis. Activities are suggested, such as making pond maps and viewers.



Pond dipping can be great fun. You need to wear wellingtons or old plimsolls and to take this pond kit.

When you catch animals in your net, put them into tubs half-filled with pond water. It is easier to look at very small animals and plants with a hand lens.

From *In the Pond*.

The close relationship to man is acknowledged in:

Discovering Bugs, George McGavin, Wayland 1988, 1 85210 065 6, £5.95. Concentrates on the real bugs (hemiptera) and this highlights creatures neglected elsewhere. Life cycle, defence, habitats and relationship to man are all covered.

Zoo in the House (1 85283 019 0) and **Zoo in the Garden** (1 85283 020 4), David Taylor, Boxtree 1987, £2.95 each pbk. Although mammals and birds are included, both books have substantial accounts of minibeasts. The text manages to be discursive *and* technical and would appeal to the 'junior expert'.

For an identification guide:

No Bones, Elizabeth Shepherd, Collier Macmillan 1988, 0 02 782880 8, £6.95. The book begins with a set of identification keys. The reader works through until led to a descriptive passage on the creature under investigation. Very thorough, the system works well as long as the reader takes one stage at a time as instructed.

FICTION AND POETRY

The Giant Jam Sandwich, Janet Burroway and John Vernon Lord, Cape, 0 224 00674 6, £4.95; Picture Piper, 0 330 30354 6, £2.50 pbk. 'One hot day in Itching Down/Four million wasps flew into town,' and they are defeated by a jam sandwich. Rhyming story.

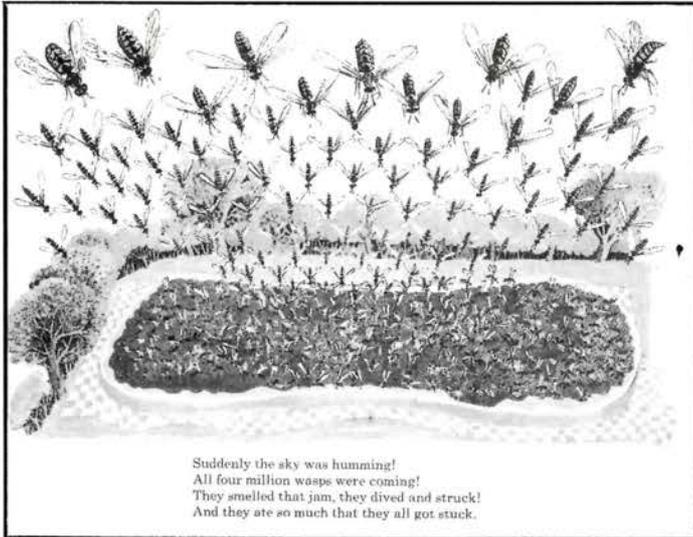
Snail and Caterpillar, Helen Piers and Pauline Baynes, Viking Kestrel, 0 7226 5269 0, o/p. A small adventure with good naturalistic illustrations of the creatures and the habitat. See also **Grasshopper and Butterfly**, 0 7226 6799 X, o/p.

Leese Webster, Ursula Le Guin, Gollancz, 0 575 02958 7, o/p. Picture book with a substantial text. The spider weaves a splendid tapestry in a museum but ultimately prefers her natural web woven out in the sun and air.

And, of course, from Eric Carle:

The Very Hungry Caterpillar, Hamish Hamilton, 0 241 01798 X, £6.95; 0 241 11908 1, £2.99 miniature; Picture Puffin, 0 14 050.087 1, £2.25 pbk

A page from **The Giant Jam Sandwich**.



The Bad-Tempered Ladybird, Hamish Hamilton, 0 241 89768 8, £6.95; Picture Puffin, 0 14 050.398 6, £1.95 pbk **The Very Busy Spider**, Hamish Hamilton, 0 241 11430 6, £10.95; 0 241 12532 4, £3.75 miniature

Short Stories

How to Stop a Train with One Finger, David Henry Wilson, Dent, 0 460 06150 X, £7.50; Piper, 0 330 28978 0, £1.99 pbk. 'Eight Hairy Legs.' A problem with a spider in the bath until Mummy shows the proper way to remove one.

A House Inside Out, Penelope Lively, Deutsch, 0 233 98167 5, £5.95; Puffin, 0 14 03.2399 6, £1.75 pbk. Several stories about house insects, including 'Nat and the Great Bath Climb' – a woodlouse's Everest.

Now Then, Charlie Robinson, Sylvia Woods, Faber, 0 571 14932 4, £5.95. 'Charlie Plans a Maths Lesson.' 'Charlie 'helps' the student to give a dramatic lesson with the aid of a few worms.

How the Whale Became, Ted Hughes, Young Puffin, 0 14 03.0482 7, £1.99 pbk. 'How the Bee Became.' The demon jeweller made the bee but only God could breathe life into it.

The Wonder Dog, Richard Hughes, Puffin, 0 14 03.1069 X, o/p. 'The Ants.' The farmer and his sons get a dangerous ant's eye view of the colony.

What the Neighbours Did, Philippa Pearce, Viking Kestrel, 0 7226 5262 3, o/p; Puffin, 0 14 03.0710 9, £1.99 pbk. 'Fresh.' A simple freshwater mussel engenders strong feelings in this beautifully written short story.

The Magician Who Kept a Pub, Dorothy Edwards, Young Lions, 0 00 671785 3, £2.25 pbk. 'The Little Chap.' A strange child is found in the heather. He grows and thrives until he begins to spin silky threads in his room. An odd fantasy and a good account of a developmental stage in the life cycle of a moth or butterfly.

Double Dare and Other Stories, Jamila Gavin, Methuen, 0 416 21540 8, o/p; 'The Mulberry Tree.' Lorraine is not allowed pets but she begins to keep silkworms and learns their fascinating story.

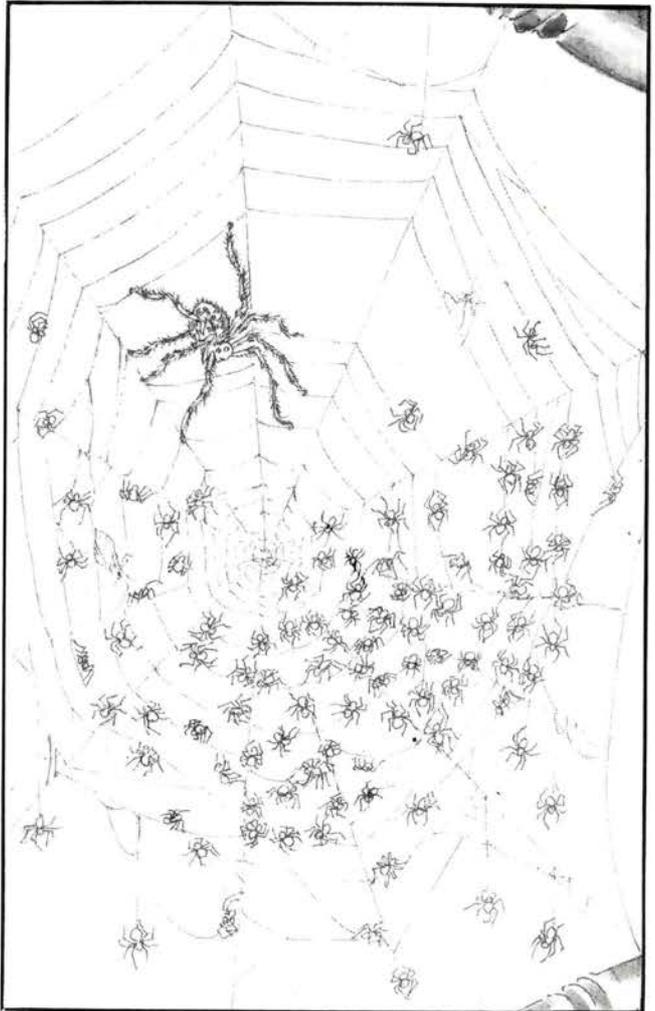
Nasty!, Michael Rosen, Longman Knockouts, 0 582 25048 X, £6.50; Puffin, 0 14 03.1599 3, £1.50 pbk. 'The Bakerloo Flea.' Not a small flea, a gigantic one which terrorises the Bakerloo Line.



The Ceremony, Martyn Copus, Lions, 0 00 672598 8, £1.75 pbk. 'The Pond.' A lesson about tadpoles, and equally, a lesson about not believing everything your friends tell you.

Novels

Emily's Legs, Dick King-Smith, Macdonald, 0 356 13685 X, £4.99; 0 356 13686 8, £1.99 pbk. Amusing short novel, at the end of which everyone should know how many legs a spider has.



From **Emily's Legs**.

Software Superslug, Joyce Dunbar, Macdonald 0 356 13494 6, £5.99; 0 356 13495 4, £1.99 pbk. Software the slug has a penchant for fancy names and for getting into trouble.

Below the Green Pond, Jane Waller, o/p. An underwater adventure, the characters being freshwater creatures. Appeals to young experts by its correct use of terms and scientific approach. Try Schools Library Services.

Ned Kelly and the City of the Bees, Thomas Keneally, Puffin, 0 14 03.1227 7, £1.95 pbk. Intriguing and unusual. Following a blow on the head, a boy is able to enter the hive and live with the bees for a summer.

Mindbenders, Nicholas Fisk, Viking Kestrel, 0 670 81244 7, £5.95; Puffin, 0 14 03.2164 0, £1.75 pbk. Two children use their exceptional powers of mind on an ant colony which seems to be providing the power. The results are alarming. Older juniors.

Poetry

The first four collections have a good number of relevant poems in animal sections:

Of Caterpillars, Cats and Cattle, Anne Harvey, Viking Kestrel, 0 670 81218 8, £6.95; Puffin, 0 14 03.2157 8, £2.99 pbk. The 'Through My Lens' section.

Is a Caterpillar Ticklish?, Adrian Rumble, Robert Royce, 0 947728 17 1, £8.95; Puffin, 0 14 03.2776 2, £2.50 pbk. The 'Skitter, scatter, leap and squeak' section.

Poems for 7-Year-Olds and Under, Helen Nicoll, Viking Kestrel, 0 670 80757 5, £6.95; Puffin, 0 14 03.1489 X, £2.50 pbk. 'Leaping and Creeping' section.

Seeing and Doing, Rosalind Farrimond, Thames Television. Two anthologies: Thames Methuen, 0 423 00850 1 (Red) and 0 423 00660 6 (Blue), £3.95 each pbk.

The Young Puffin Book of Verse, Barbara Ireson, Puffin, 0 14 03.0410 X, £2.50 pbk. 'Hurt No Living Thing' and 'The Caterpillar' by Christina Rossetti, and 'Upside Down' by Aileen Fisher.

A Third Poetry Book, John Foster, Oxford, 0 19 918140 3, £5.95; 0 19 918139 X, £2.95 pbk. 'The Wolf Spider' by R C Scriven, 'Mosquito' by Peggy Dunstan, 'A Hair Raising Experience' by Carey Blyton, 'Cyril the Centipede' by Jeremy Lloyd, and 'Hannibal the Snail' by Julie Holder.

The Jungle Sale, June Crebbin, Viking Kestrel, 0 670 82195 0, £5.95. 'Cobweb Morning', 'Giant Moth', 'Silk-moth Monitor', and 'Please'.

Midnight Forest, Judith Nicholls, Faber, 0 571 14807 7, £2.95 pbk. 'Dusk', 'Shadows', and 'Woodlouse'.

Before You Grow Up, Fiona Akister, Viking Kestrel, 0 670 81712 0, £5.95; Puffin, 0 14 03.2368 6, pbk (summer 1989). Very short nonsense poems about bees, spiders and snails.

Early in the Morning, Charles Causley, Viking Kestrel, 0 670 80810 5, £8.95; Puffin, 0 14 03.2033 4, £1.50 pbk. 'Spin Me a Web, Spider', and 'Tell, Tell the Bees'.

Pictures and Poems, Philip Green, 112a Alcester Road, Studley, Warwickshire B80 7NR. Poems accompanied by A4 photographs, each on a separate card. Two useful sets: **Small Creatures 1** and **Small Creatures 2**.

Pleas-e!

Bumble bee, bumble bee,
Fly away home;
Leave my naked toes
Alone!

Bumble bee, bumble bee,
Don't you know
Another place where
You can go?

Bumble bee, bumble bee,
When I doze off,
I don't need you, so
Buzz off!



From **The Jungle Sale**.

Curiosity

A hedgehog came into our garden today,
Grunting and snuffling and shuffling his way
To where our mother was hanging the washing to
dry,
In the cold, grey, late November.
Hardly more than a baby, his spikes scarcely stiff;
Two black button eyes; wet, curious snout.
He didn't curl up; he didn't run away –
Perhaps HIS mother wasn't too far away – and felt
Safe enough to let my sister and me
Touch his bristly coat carefully,
Just in case.
We laughed, and we shouted, 'Look Mummy!
Look Mummy!'
But, before she could turn, he gave
A twitch of his nose, and trotted back
To his mother in the bushes.

Adrian Rumble



From **Is a Caterpillar Ticklish?**

USEFUL ADDRESSES

British Bee Keepers Association
National Agricultural Centre
Stoneleigh
Kenilworth
Warwickshire
CV18 2LZ
(Info., Bee keepers!)

Building Societies Association
Schools Liaison Officer
3 Savile Row
London
W1X 1AF
(‘Homes’ chart)

International Bee Research Association
Hill House
Gerrards Cross
Buckinghamshire
SL9 0NR
(Book, aids list)

Natural History Museum
Visitor Resources
Cromwell Road
London
SW7 5BD
(Worksheets)

Nature Conservancy Council
P O Box 6
Godwin House
George Street
Huntingdon
PE18 6BU
(Info. and library service)

Rentokil Ltd
Felcourt
East Grinstead
Sussex
RH19 2JY
(Chart)

School Natural Science Society
Publications Officer
ASE
College Lane
Hatfield
Hertfordshire
AL10 9AA
(‘Housing Living Things in the Classroom’)

Shell Education Service
Shell-Mex House
The Strand

London
WC2R 0DX
(Posters, charts)

And for £3.00:
Minibeast Snackpack
Urban Spaces Scheme
Polytechnic of North London
Holloway Road
London
N7 8DB
(A4 cards)

Themes previously covered in the series: **House and Home** (July 88), **Water** (September 88), **Clothing** (November 88), **Food** (January 89), **The Senses** (March 89) and **Celebrations and Festivals** (May 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.

John Dunne, Assistant County Librarian (Children's and Schools) for Hampshire County Library, reports on . . .

A VISIT TO PAKISTAN



Above, illustration from **Sing Song**, poetry by Asad Kazim. Left, Pakistan colleagues with John Dunne.

My visit was organised by the British Council on behalf of the Government of Sind, Department of Culture and Tourism. My remit was to advise on children's library services and to run a course in children's librarianship. This meant visiting existing libraries and writing reports on them and running two courses for teachers and librarians, in Karachi and Hyderabad.

Pakistan has featured prominently in the news recently, largely because of political rather than cultural issues. Benazir Bhutto's coming to power in December hailed the start of a new era of democracy. The Russian withdrawal from Afghanistan brought attention to the role of the Mujihadeen, who were based in Pakistan. Finally, the proximity to Iran has inevitably led to a more fundamentalist approach in some quarters. This has been particularly evident in reactions to **The Satanic Verses** with demonstrations and attacks on the British Council.

However, as a guest of the Government of Sind, in south east Pakistan, I came to discover a different aspect of the country. The Department of Culture and Tourism, in its efforts to combat illiteracy, is introducing a far-sighted policy of library development. Children's libraries are being set up in major towns and a mobile library service is being introduced in rural areas. Library provision in general is good, with large spacious buildings. Use of the well-stocked libraries is free, but books may not be borrowed, so adults and children come to sit in the library to read. A healthy library service depends on access to good books and it was this aspect of provision which provided the most interesting insights into the book trade in Pakistan.

In the two children's libraries which exist at the moment - Karachi and Sehwan Sharif - a large proportion of the stock is in English. This reflects the fact that English is a common language in many schools, together with Urdu. In some schools almost all subjects are taught in English and children take 'O' and 'A' levels, so the demand for books in English is high.

Children's publishing in Urdu is buoyant at present with a good range of children's fiction being published in paperback, at reasonable prices by local standards, i.e. between 30p and 50p. These books have illustrated covers, are printed on good paper and contain coloured illustrations. There is also an interesting range of magazines for children of similar quality. The gap in the market is in the non-fiction areas where, apart from home economics titles, there is a dearth of material. However, publishers are anxious to acquire rights to translate English titles into Urdu, especially in science and other areas. There was also a lot of interest among publishers and librarians in dual-language books and this may be a further area for development.

One of the great problems for colleagues in Pakistan is the absence of library suppliers and, although many publishers act as booksellers as well, the task of seeing a wide range of materials is difficult. Similarly, the opportunity for librarians and publishers to get together is rare. One such meeting was specially arranged for me and proved very useful for both parties. The occasional large book fairs held in Karachi do however provide an opportunity to see a wide selection of stock. During my visit, the American Book Fair took place in the YMCA grounds with American and local booksellers exhibiting. The Fair was opened by the Vice-Chancellor of Karachi University who made three interesting points in his opening speech: there were not enough good books in Urdu; there was a

shortage of good writers; and the education system did not seem to foster the habit of reading. He went on further to extol the virtues of his own education, in pre-independence days, when there was a strong emphasis on reading good literature.

The respect given to British culture was evident in many cases. The high regard in which the British Council is held is another example of this. The British Council library in Karachi provides a wide range of books, adult and children's, for loan. There is also an excellent reference library and periodicals room. Membership of the library is available for a small subscription (55 rupees/80p) and for this members have access to the best collection of books in English in Karachi.

The bombing which took place there at the end of February was therefore a travesty against the Pakistani users of the library, rather than the British Council itself. As the local English-language paper, 'Dawn', made clear in its editorial, the bomb killed a Pakistani guard, prevented Pakistanis from using the library and all supposedly as a protest against a book (**The Satanic Verses**) which was already banned. Fortunately the library is open again and is continuing to give good service to its members.

As a librarian I discovered that librarianship is truly international and that my colleagues in Pakistan struggle with problems similar to those we face in Britain. One of the aspects of children's librarianship I discussed with colleagues was storytelling, and this resulted in one of the happiest memories of my courses there. Having arranged a visit to the children's library at Sehwan Sharif, I decided to do a practical storytelling session. Looking frantically through the Picture Puffins for something with a flavour of the sub-continent, I found an old favourite, **The Tiger Skin Rug** by Gerald Rose. The familiar words and pictures took on a new meaning as I read the story, but the enjoyment of my audience was that of people anywhere in the world responding to the magic of a good children's book. ■

The following titles provide useful background information on life in Pakistan:

We Live in Pakistan, Mohamed Amin, Wayland 1984, 0 85078 474 3, £5.95. Descriptions of different people's working lives which provide an interesting insight into the country.

Pakistan, David Cumming, Wayland 'Countries of the World' 1989, 1 85210 055 9, £7.50. A highly informative book which covers all aspects of Pakistani life. The illustrations are particularly good.

At Home and Abroad with Amar and Zarqa, Steve Harrison, Macmillan Education 1986, 0 333 38612 4, £5.70. Two children, born in England, return to the land of their parents and discover both new and familiar experiences.

Junaid in Lahore, Ailsa and Alan Scarsbrook, A & C Black 'Beans' (1987), 0 7136 2850 2, £4.50. A very readable story of a young boy's daily life in Lahore.

Pakistani Village, Ailsa and Alan Scarsbrook, A & C Black 'Beans' 1979, 0 7136 1976 7, £4.50. A good introduction to village life as seen through the eyes of a young boy.

AWARDS

The Children's Book Circle announces the winner of the 1989 Eleanor Farjeon Award as Anna Home, Head of BBC Children's Television

Few people have brought books and television together for children so successfully as Anna Home. A former bookseller and teacher, Anna has been working in television since 1960. Working as a Research Assistant, she was involved in the setting-up of *Play School* in 1964 and soon after *Jackanory*, of which she became Executive Producer in 1967. After a quarter of a century, *Jackanory* continues to bring together the best books for children read by a wide range of imaginatively chosen actors.

Throughout her television career, Anna Home has continued to strengthen the position of children's literature through the medium of television. She has been involved in the growth of the Children's Drama Unit, producing a number of book-based series such as Helen Cresswell's *Bagthorpe Saga* and E Nesbit's *The Phoenix and the Carpet*. In 1977 Anna started the award-winning and perhaps most controversial drama series, *Grange Hill*, which is still running on BBC1. 1979 saw the start of her teenage drama department for BBC2 with a series based on Joan Lingard's character *Maggie*.

In 1981 Anna Home left the BBC to join TVS as one of the founder members of the franchise winning group. As Controller of Programmes and later Deputy of Programmes, and on the TVS Board, she was part of the senior management team responsible for policy and strategy, and created the Children's and Young People's Department out of which came a number of successful series including *No 73* and *Knights of God*.

In 1986 Anna rejoined the BBC as Head of Children's Television Programmes. She is currently responsible for some 900 hours of transmission each year, ranging from comedy to natural history. Again her belief in children's books was shown last year when she introduced C S Lewis's *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* to millions of captivated children and parents.



Anna Home.

Anna Home is respected throughout the world of television and publishing for her consistently high standards of work in children's television over a number of years. She has shown that books and television are complementary arts, not sworn enemies as is often said to be the case, and she is actively involved in the campaign for the funding of children's television at a time when it is under threat.

Previously winner of a BAFTA Award, recipient of a Pye Award for Distinguished Services to Children's Television, and a Fellow of the Royal Television Society, Anna Home is a deserving winner of the 25th prestigious Eleanor Farjeon Award. **BfK** congratulates her!

The Eleanor Farjeon Award is presented annually by the Children's Book Circle for distinguished service to children and books, and is sponsored by Books for Children.

The 1989 Earthworm Award Winners

The winner of the 1989 Earthworm Award, the UK's only green prize for children's books, is **Awaiting Developments** by Judy Allen (Julia MacRae, 0 86203 356 X, £8.95) which traces one girl's campaign and battle to save a beautiful house and garden from unscrupulous developers. Judy Allen receives £1,000 and a specially carved wooden bowl which she keeps for one year.

Julia MacRae said at the award ceremony that she was 'particularly pleased to have won this Award for the second year running (1988 winner was *Where the Forest Meets the Sea* by Jeannie Baker). The environment is not only something we at Julia MacRae Books care about, but something which we know children care deeply about. We've been publishing "green" books for them for many years now, so it's very rewarding to have them officially recognised by Friends of the Earth.'

The three runners-up, each receiving £250, are:

Tree, David Burnie, Dorling Kindersley Eyewitness Guides, 0 86318 286 0, £6.95

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

Investigating Minibeasts pack, ILEA Learning Resources Branch, £35.00 (£28.00 ILEA)

The winning titles and the shortlist will be displayed in libraries and bookshops around the country, including branches of Hatchards, Waterstones and W H Smith.

The Earthworm Award was started three years ago. It aims to promote and reward environmental awareness and sensitivity in literature (fiction and non-fiction) for children of all ages.

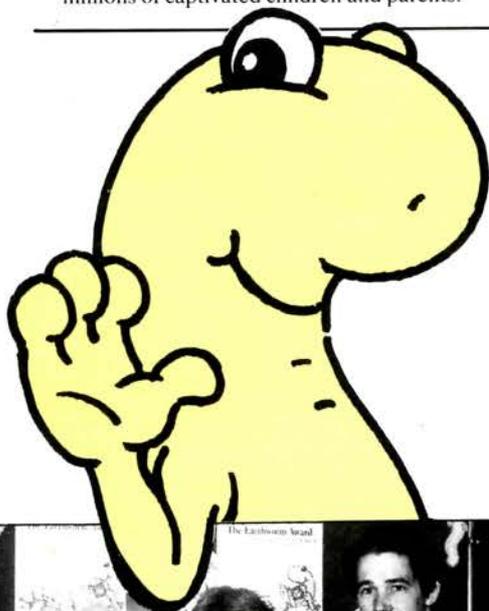
The judges for the 1989 Award were Raymond Briggs, Michael Buerk, Sarah Greene, Jan Mark, Henry Pluckrose, Jonathon Porritt, Fiona Waters and Kaye Webb.

P.S. **Friends of the Earth** are setting up a new nationwide environmental competition for primary schools next year. Details should be available later this year.

And we at **Books for Keeps** have begun work on a 'Green' Children's Booklist. It is very much at the planning stage but we'll keep you posted. We're hoping to publish it some time during 1990.

Carnegie and Greenaway: the 1988 Winners

These awards given by the Youth Libraries Group of the Library Association - Carnegie for a work of children's fiction and Greenaway for illustration - and probably the most important of any during the year, were announced too late for us to carry



Left to right, Julia MacRae, Judy Allen and Jonathon Porritt.

evaluative comment. It is interesting to note that both the winning books have won other awards.

The Carnegie Medal

has been won by Geraldine McCaughrean for **A Pack of Lies** (Oxford, 0 19 271612 3, £7.95). As reported in our May issue, the book received the 1989 Guardian Children's Fiction Award.

Also shortlisted were:

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

Awaiting Developments, Judy Allen, Julia MacRae, 0 86203 356 X, £8.95

A Map of Nowhere, Gillian Cross, Oxford, 0 19 271583 6, £7.95

Eva, Peter Dickinson, Gollancz, 0 575 04354 7, £7.95

The Lives of Christopher Chant, Diana Wynne Jones, Methuen, 0 416 10742 7, £8.95

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

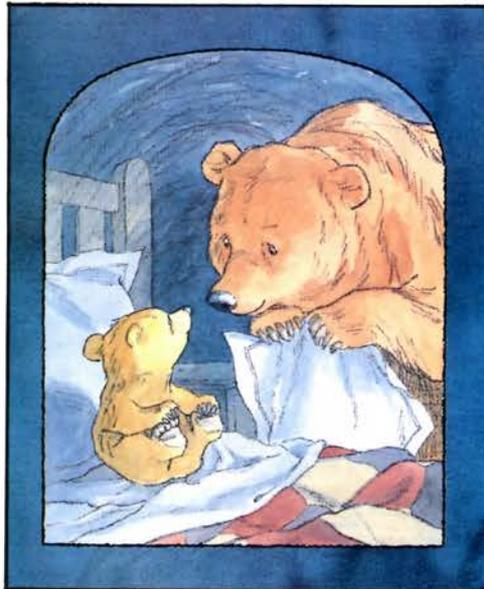
The Kate Greenaway Award

has been won by Barbara Firth for her illustrations for **Can't You Sleep, Little Bear?** by Martin Waddell (Walker, 0 7445 0796 0, £6.95). The book was also the 1988 Grand Prize winner of the Smarties Prize.

Also shortlisted were:

Ladybird, Ladybird, Ruth Brown, Andersen, 0 86264 200 0, £5.95

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



From **Can't You Sleep, Little Bear?**, winner of the Kate Greenaway Award.

Wake Up, Mr B!, Penny Dale, Walker, 0 7445 1085 6, £6.95

Pinocchio, Carlo Collodi, ill. Roberto Innocenti, Cape, 0 224 02523 6, £8.95

Merlin Dreams, Peter Dickinson, ill. Alan Lee, Gollancz, 0 575 03962 0, £9.95

A Certificate of Merit was awarded to the entire team responsible for the 'Eyewitness Guides' and in particular for **Bird** (0 86318 270 4, £6.95) published by Dorling Kindersley.

Best Books for Babies

The £1000 Award given by **Parents Magazine** and administered by Book Trust for the best book for the under-4s. This year's winner was **Wake Up, Dad!** by Sally Grindley and illustrated by Siobhan Dodds (Simon & Schuster, 0 671 69949 0, £4.95). The award is judged by ten families chosen by **Parents**.



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

The under-16 category of this award, now in its second year, went to **The Way Things Work** by David Macaulay and Neil Ardley (Dorling Kindersley, 0 86318 323 9, £15.00). If you want to know what we thought of this amazing and wonderful book, turn back to your March edition of **BfK** where we featured it on our cover and interviewed David Macaulay for our Authorgraph.

SOUND & VISION

An update of TV, Film and Radio information

We haven't run a **Sound and Vision** update since the January issue – there hasn't been a lot to report. Come to think of it, there's still not a great deal happening but it's worth looking out for the following:

Danny the Champion of the World

Roald Dahl, Cape, 0 224 01201 0, £6.95; Puffin, 0 14 03.2287 6, £2.50 pbk

We first reported this back in the July 88 issue of **BfK** speculating that we wouldn't see it before next year, or even the next decade! We now know the premier will be on 28th July 1989 at an as yet unannounced posh London venue with the film then going on general release. Rumours have it that it's fantastic... or that nobody seems terribly enthusiastic! We'll know if we get invited to the preview (if there is one) and we'll do our darnedest to slip a review into the September issue. No promises though! Should be good with a cast list including Jeremy Irons (and his son, Sam), Cyril Cusack, Robbie Coltrane, Lionel Jeffries and Michael Hordern.

Back Home

Michelle Magorian, Viking Kestrel, 0 670 80670 6, £7.95; Puffin, 0 14 03.1907 7, £2.99 pbk

Val Randall reviewed the book in the January 88 issue of **BfK** – 'long and enjoyable'. As far as the tie-in is concerned,

here's what we know... It's TV (don't know which channel), it's scheduled for this summer, it's two hours' long and it stars Hayley Mills. And all this after exhaustive research!



Why the Whales Came

Michael Morpurgo, Heinemann, 0 434 95200 1, £7.95; Mandarin, 0 416 13972 8, £2.50 pbk

An outstanding book, a superb cast (Helen Mirren and Paul Scofield) and a Royal Gala Performance on 6th September with the Prince and Princess of Wales in attendance, must make this a must, mustn't it? If we possibly can, we'll let you know...

Marianne Dreams

Catherine Storr, Lutterworth, 0 7188 2768 6, £7.95; Puffin, 0 14 03.0209 3, £1.95 pbk

A feature-film, retitled **Paperhouse** for the screen, and starring Charlotte Burke, Elliot Spears and Ben Cross, is currently out on general release. If anyone catches sight of it, do let us know.

Living Language schedule for the Autumn 89 term

This September the BBC Schools Radio series **Living Language** (Thursday mornings at 9.30), well-known for its dramatisations of classic books, offers a new package of materials devised with the National Curriculum primary language targets very much in mind. Teacher's notes linking with the broadcasts contain extensive pupil worksheets which build into a language and writing project. Broadcasts are as follows:

21st September – **The Book Cellar**. Interview with Robert Leeson about drafting and other aspects of the writer's craft.

28th September (in three episodes) – **Rosie Blitz**. Richard Pinner's radio adaptation of his stage play about evacuees.

19th and 26th October – **Shadows**. A war drama from Europe by Roy Appis.

2nd November – **Incredible Inventions**. An audio-anthology of poets.

9th November (in three episodes) – Robert Leeson's **The Third Class Genie**.

30th November – **Pantomama**. Children review films and shows for children.

There's also a radio writing competition for teachers and a chance for children to broadcast their own features.

Readathon

– Britain's Biggest Reading Event!

As the cranking-up gets under way for this October's Readathon, **Brough Girling**, the campaign's director and head of the Children's Book Foundation, explains how Readathon was founded and how it works.

If last October was anything to go by, hundreds of thousands of children will take part in this year's Readathon. They will read well over a million books between them and, given a fair wind, they'll raise over a million pounds to help children who are suffering from cancer.

It was some six years ago now that I and many colleagues at Books for Students were growing increasingly concerned that nothing much was being done to encourage children to read. Video games were all the rage, and while we knew we couldn't take on the might of the electronics industry, it would be good if we could find some way of getting children to read a lot of books, and to create some publicity about it.

A major problem was that we all felt that a worthy campaign saying 'reading is good' or 'pick up a book' is more inclined to put off the reluctant or lazy reader than get them going.

Some of us were sitting one day in a bar in Budapest – you know, the way one does. (Actually we were attending an International Schools Conference.) We were chewing the problem over when some bright spark said, 'Why don't we get them to read books for money?' Readathon was born!

Readathon is very simple. It works just like a school-sponsored walk except that the children read books for pledges of money from family and friends, instead of doing dreary laps of the playground: it's surely a lot more worthwhile.

The first year, 1984, we held Readathon in aid of Mencap. We were amazed when the bank phoned us with the news that we'd raised £100,000! The next year we chose World Wildlife Fund; result: £137,000. We knew we were on to something spectacular.

Our managing director pointed out that the choice of charity was a vital factor in our success. 'Do some market research,' she said, 'see who the teachers and children would really like to raise money for.'

I circulated a list of charities and asked schools to prioritise them. I put in the

Malcolm Sargent Cancer Fund because I'd been to a fund-raising concert in Peterborough Cathedral the night before.

MSCF won hands down: in fact it got more votes than the next three charities added together – they, if I remember rightly, were Oxfam, Barnardo and Guide Dogs.

'Please encourage your pupils to join Readathon; not only will they have a good read, they will be helping children with cancer at the same time.'

Roald Dahl,
Readathon Chairman



We ran the campaign and raised a quarter of a million pounds. It was the biggest cheque the Fund had ever received, and we knew that our MD had been right. We had found a charity that everyone – teachers, children and parents – wanted to support.

All that seems quite far off now – though it's only a couple of years ago. It's been superseded by 1987's campaign when we raised £406,000 and last year's Readathon which reached three-quarters of a million pounds.

Books for Students knew from the outset that if Readathon was going to be significant, and that means big, we would need the help of as many people in the children's book industry as possible. Puffin Books therefore take the campaign to the high street trade – with W H Smith, the major chains and independent shops giving lots of support. Scholastic book clubs, Puffin clubs and Books for Keeps give enormous help by distributing enrolment forms to their customers. A major development in 1988 was that Typhoo Tea had agreed to sponsor all our costs – so the printing and promotion, over £50,000 worth, is paid for.

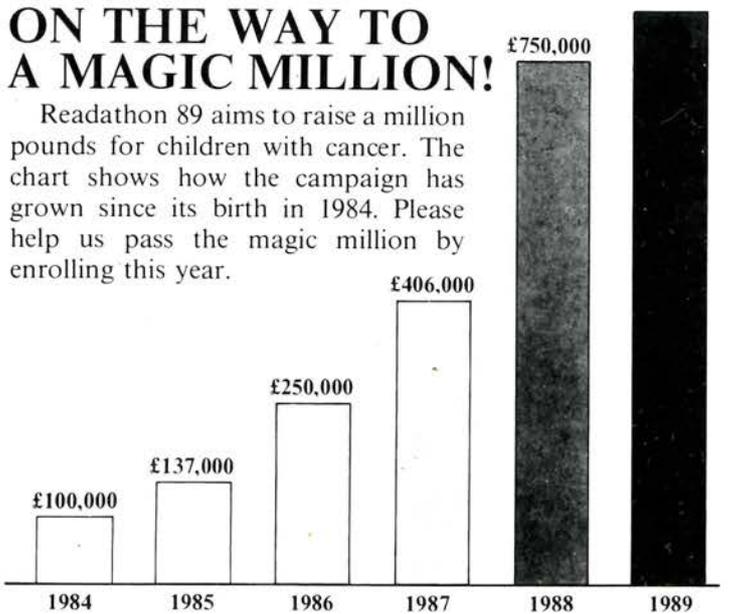
Readathon '89 aims to raise a million pounds. Once more we are fortunate to have Typhoo's help. It won't be easy, but we know now that Readathon has a magic formula. After all, what can be better than a campaign that encourages children to read books, and helps the Malcolm Sargent Cancer Fund at the same time?

We need your help to reach our target. Please write or phone us at: The Readathon Office, Books for Students, Heathcote Estate, Warwick CV34 6TB (Tel: 0926 314366).

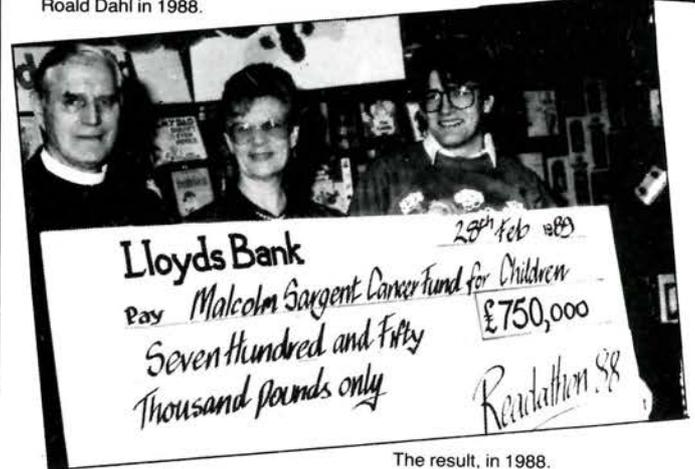
We believe that Readathon is a valuable ingredient in any school book week or book event. It's something practical that every child can do, and it's all about reading. **Books for Keeps** would like to hear from any school that has used Readathon in this way. We'd also be interested in any details or research concerning the stimulus Readathon can give to reading activity in a school, and what books were read. ■

ON THE WAY TO A MAGIC MILLION!

Readathon 89 aims to raise a million pounds for children with cancer. The chart shows how the campaign has grown since its birth in 1984. Please help us pass the magic million by enrolling this year.



Blue Peter entertained Roald Dahl in 1988.



The result, in 1988.

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



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BOOKS FOR KEEPS NEWS



Summer Storyboat

A free voyage on the Grand Union Canal? Along with storytellers and illustrators like John Ryan, Errol Lloyd, Bob Leeson, Kevin Crossley-Holland, Jan Mark, Molly Burkett et al? No pressgang needed for this vessel you may think – especially with painting, singing, fancy dress and nature walks also on offer. The Summer Storyboat casts off from Watford on Monday, 24th July and calls at Kings Langley and Apsley on Tuesday, Hemel Hempstead on Wednesday and Berkhamsted on Thursday before dropping anchor at Tring on Friday, 28th July. No passport needed.

Details from Hertfordshire Libraries by way of an SAE (A5 size) to Alan White, 69 Cromwell Road, Hertford SG13 7DP, or telephone 0992 584530.

Are You Booked Up?

A snappy title, and suitably lengthy advance notice for a seminar at Portsmouth Central Library on Wednesday, 18th October 1989. It's organised by British IBBY (International Board on Books for Young People) at an all-in price of £20 which includes coffee, lunch and tea. The subject could hardly be more important – book funding and supply in the context of GCSE and the National Curriculum. Speakers include Keith McWilliams, Julia Eccleshare, Bob Leeson and **BfK's** own Eleanor von Schweinitz.

Booking forms and more information from Ferialith Hordon (IBBY Seminar) at the Children's Book Foundation, 45 East Hill, London SW18 2QZ (Tel: 01-870 9055/8).

... and while we're offering advance notice, don't forget:

Children's Book Week this year runs from 7th-14th October with a launch at Book Trust on Thursday, 5th October. Brough Girling (see page 26) will be leading this annual campaign to focus the nation's attention on children's books, liaising with publishers, the media and local initiatives. What's being planned in your area?



KIRI TALES KANAWA

As radiant as her singing or just another celebrity-snare? We'll know in September when Pavilion publish **Land of the Long White Cloud** (1 85145 176 5, £9.99), Dame Kiri Te Kanawa's favourite tales from her childhood – a personal selection from the myths and legends of the Polynesian sailors who discovered New Zealand. Half-Maori herself, Dame Kiri recounted these stories to her own children so the omens are good. And since the illustrations are by Michael Foreman, inspired by his attendance at the recent gathering of the Te Kanawa family, this may well be a collection to look out for. His jacket-design suggests a down-under Erik the Viking.

TO BAN OR NOT TO BAN?

... that is the question in our next issue. Always current, but never more so than in recent months, the subject of censorship takes on a special significance where children are concerned. After all, it's obvious they of all people need protection. Or do they?

Read

- Bob Leeson on Censorship Past
- Nick Tucker on Censorship Present (the ages-and-stages argument)
- Toby Forward and Jean Ure on 'bad' language in books

plus cautionary tales from the perspectives of Parent, Publisher, Teacher, Librarian and Bookseller.

Don't miss September's **Books for Keeps** on Censorship.

PAMELA BROWN



Pamela Brown, as she appeared on the jackets of her books in the 1940s and 1950s.

Earlier this year, an in-service student of mine identified Pamela Brown's **The Swish of the Curtain** (John Goodchild, 0 86391 057 2, £6.95), originally published in 1941, as her favourite book as a child. Several other members of the group – established teachers with a keen interest in children's literature – instantly spoke up for it. 'Like Noel Streatfeild only less posh,' one of them commented. Of course, the serialisation for BBC Children's Hour in 1944 did much for its popularity at the time... but doesn't account for my own daughter's enthusiasm some four decades later. She literally read her copy to pieces.

Pamela Brown was born in 1924 and began **The Swish of the Curtain** when she was only fourteen. She earned enough from the book to pay for her studies at the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art and went on to work as an actress under the name of Mela Brown. Later she joined the BBC where her work included producing the television version of **Little Women**. She wrote more than twenty books, among them a story-biography of Louisa M Alcott called **Louisa**, but most reflecting her passion for the theatre. It would be interesting to know how many youngsters she encouraged into a stage career as well as into the reading habit. She died on 26th January.

Chris Powling

Books at Edinburgh

Back again this Summer, and running alongside the main Festival, Edinburgh's biennial Book Festival is to be opened by Roald Dahl on 12th August. Visitors during the following fortnight include Michael Rosen, Johnny Morris and Joan Lingard... as well, of course, as luminaries from the world of adult literature. A publicity handout is available from the Festival Office on 031-225 1915.