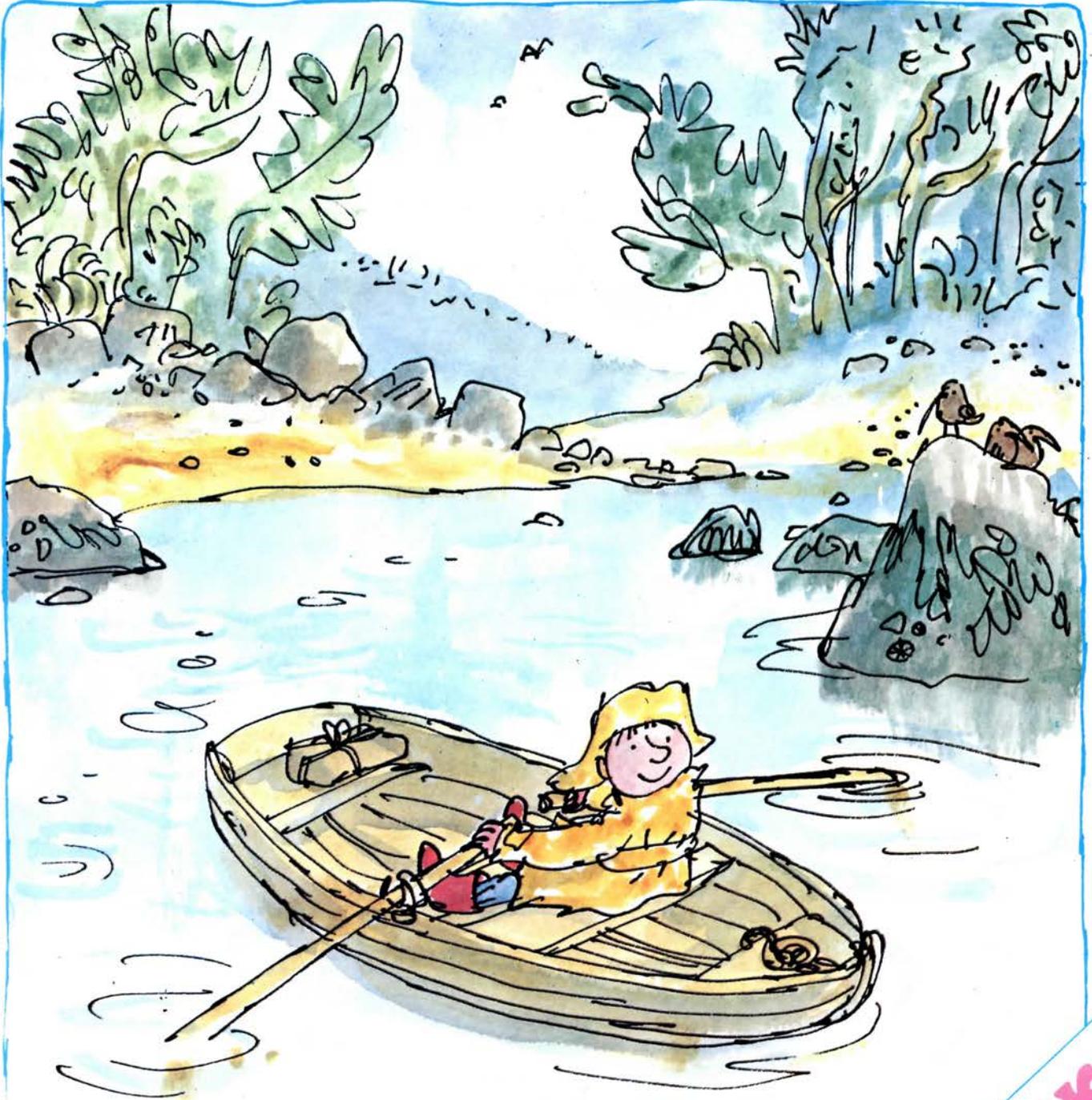


BOOKS FOR KEEPS

May 1981 No.8
UK Price 75p



I put out to sea
in a wooden row-boat
with a cheese and pickle sandwich
and a yellow hat and coat.

PICTURE BOOKS
& POETRY

Contents

Editor's Page 3

News and comment from the Editor

Which Poem? 4

Howard Sergeant advises on choosing poems for classrooms

Reviews 7

Paperback

Nursery/Infant
Infant/Junior
Junior/Middle
Middle/Secondary
Older Readers

Hardback 12

New Poetry Books

A Moveable Feast 14

Pat Triggs looks at pop-ups

Authorgraph No. 8 16

David McKee

Picture Book People 18

Focus on Tomie de Paola, Susanna Gretz, Celia Beridge, Colin McNaughton, Mitsumasa Anno and Peter Spier

Poet in School 23

Mike Rosen visits Gayhurst Junior School

The Children's Book Award 26

Meet the Federation of Children's Book Groups and the winner of its new award

News 27

Sound and Vision 29

News and views about books on radio, TV and films

Eleanor Farjeon 30

Anne Harvey celebrates a centenary

The Sixteenth Eleanor Farjeon Award 32

Meet the winners

Opinion

David Bennett accuses mean and myopic big book-sellers

Cover illustration by Quentin Blake from Michael Rosen's *You Can't Catch Me!*

BOOKS FOR KEEPS

- the magazine of the
School Bookshop Association

MAY 1981 No. 8

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

Editorial correspondence:

Pat Triggs
36 Ravenswood Road
Bristol, Avon, BS6 6BW
Tel: 0272 49048

Subscriptions and advertising:

Richard Hill
1 Effingham Road
Lee, London, SE12 8NZ
Tel: 01-852 4953

©School Bookshop Association 1981

No. 8 May 1981

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

All photographs, unless otherwise credited,
by Richard Mewton.

BOOKS FOR KEEPS

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

Annual subscription for six issues:
£4.50 UK, £7.50 overseas.
Single copies direct from the SBA:
75p UK, £1.25 overseas.



Reviewers

in this issue



Jill Bennett

Jill is an infant teacher, currently on a course at the Institute of Education in London. She is Literary Editor of *Child Education* and on the Board of the SBA.



David Bennett

David (no relation to Jill) is a former librarian, and currently Head of English in a Nottinghamshire secondary school.



Steve Bowles

Steve was a secondary English teacher and co-producer of *Reviewsheet* until it ceased publication. He is now writing full-time.



Bill Boyle

Bill teaches in Middle School in Wirral. He was founding Deputy Editor of *Junior Education*.

Pat Triggs

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

Looking Ahead

In July we are looking at *Science Fact and Science Fiction*.

Plus a special non-fiction review feature, suggestions for holiday reading and our regular features.



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

The intrepid seaman on our cover, with his cheese and pickle sandwich and his yellow hat and coat is from **You Can't Catch Me!** (Deutsch 233 97345 1, £4.25 approx) a collection of Michael Rosen poems for the under eights with pictures by Quentin Blake. It's a book full of delights, verbal and visual, which we wanted to show you as soon as we saw it. What better way, we thought, to start **Books for Keeps 8** which is all about poetry and picture books. That we are able to, and in full colour too, is due to the generosity and support of the publishers, Andre Deutsch. We think they have got a splendid book and we are grateful for their confidence in us.

The poems in the book include some old favourites — those Mike Rosen has found particularly successful with young children on his visits to schools — and some new ones. I talked to Quentin Blake about the book at the Federation of Children's Book Groups conference where he was the delighted recipient of the new Children's Book Award (see page 26). He said he felt he'd got something a little different, a little extra, into his pictures for this book. I think he's right. Two of the new poems in particular, **I am Jojo**, and the title poem, **You Can't Catch Me**, a dialogue between a small child and his father, have sparked off pictures with more than the free flowing line and racy comic exuberance which characterises Quentin Blake. There's a sense of the marvellous mystery and the delightful terrors of a childhood within a secure home. You'll have to wait a little to see them, though. **You Can't Catch Me!** won't be in the shops until the autumn. Put it on your list now.

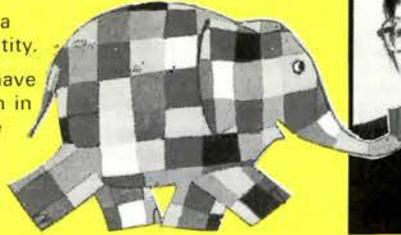
● Bring Back Elmer

This issue is bursting with picture book people. (Had you noticed we've gone up to 32 pages. What value for money!) Proving, we think, that picture books are for all ages. We chose **David McKee** for the Authorgraph (page 16) not only because he's multi-talented, interesting, controversial and very nice; but because children love the humorous fantasy of Mr. Benn, Melric the Magician and Elmer, the Patchwork Elephant. Amazingly, only one of these, **The Magician who lost his Magic**, is currently available in paperback. Elmer, who has captured the imaginations of countless children and filled Infant classrooms with wall-sized Elmers, puppet Elmers, friezes full of Elmers, is out of print! Come on Piccolo, BRING BACK ELMER. And while you're about it what about some more Melric? Puffin used to have two Mr Benn titles. Where are they now? And I can't understand why *someone* doesn't re-issue **Two can Toucan** (especially with Guinness making the bird so well-

EDITOR'S PAGE

known again) — it's a gem of a story about the search for identity.

One bright spot. Dobson will have two Elmer titles available again in hardback this autumn, and one new one **Elmer and Wilbur**.



● Moving Books

Pop-ups, moveables, call them what you will, they are certainly moving into the best seller lists and more and more publishers are jumping onto the bandwagon in the hope of an enormous success like Jan Pienkowski's **The Haunted House** or Robert Crowther's **The Most Amazing Hide-and-Seek Alphabet Book**. We looked behind the pop-up scene and found Wally Hunt and Intervisual Communications Incorporated (see page 14). Is it all just a gimmick? Are they toys, not books? Well, they are certainly one way to get children interested; but, as always there has to be some adult on hand with the right book to take advantage of the enthusiasm. And not many have the sort of quality that keeps you going back for fresh delights. It's a greedy medium — the search for more amazing and amusing ideas and techniques to keep people buying could become relentless. When novelty is what you offer the bored yawn of 'I've seen it before' is death. As ICI become practised in certain techniques it seems inevitable that books will begin to look more and more the same. But if they can work with artists like Pienkowski and Crowther who, although very different in temperament and in their attitude to the pop-up industry, are bursting with ideas and imagination, it's likely that at least some books will continue to surprise and delight us.

● Paperback Originals

Bodley Head don't publish any pop-ups, although Judy Taylor, children's editor, thinks they are a great attempt to sell books' and wishes more were linked to real books. But they have broken new ground with Paperback Originals in their New Adult series. It's not possible now, they say, to publish a hardback novel under £5, and anyway adolescents feel more at home with paperbacks. The books are large format, with sewn bindings and cost between £3 and £4. One of the first titles is **Your Friend, Rebecca** (0 370 30418 7, £3.25) a first novel by Linda Hoy. Margaret Clark, children's book director at Bodley Head, says, 'New authors are in danger of never being published. Everyone tells me they spend hardly any money on authors who are not well-established.' This one is certainly worth a try: a readable first person narrative,

which manages for the most part to sound right (not easy) and funny, by Rebecca (15) whose mother is dead and who is painfully working out an existence at school and at home with Dad.

● Books of the Year?

'Brilliant'. That's what Jill Bennett and one of her seven-year-olds think about **Truck**, a picture book by Donald Crews (Bodley Head, 0 570 30396 2, £3.50) Jill brought it back from the States last year and says it caused more than one fight in her classroom. It's textless, but not wordless: letters, street signs, advertisements abound as a red truck makes its way to the docks. Says Jill, 'The pages are crammed with interesting items and shapes; guaranteed to keep small boys absorbed for hours. Undoubtedly one of the best picture books so far this year.'

I'd add to that, **Sunshine**, a wordless picture book from a new artist Jan Ormerod (Kestrel, 0 7226 576 6, £3.95, published May 28th), about the waking up and before-school doings of a small girl. It's full of warmth and humour and the pictures make Jan Ormerod my nomination, so far, for next year's Mother Goose award. Coming soon, a follow up, **Moonlight**, about bedtime.

● Man in Motion

That's the title of a new series devised and created by Alec Davis, who designs **Books for Keeps**. He lives in the Forest of Dean with his wife and five children and (when he has time) makes the most amazing and beautiful models out of card, paper and bits. Each book is about the development of a different form of transport and is full of information and illustrations as well as detailed instructions and plans for making six or seven models. (**In the Air**, 0 263 06439 5, **On the Road**, 0 263 06437 9. Both from Mills and Boon, £1.75.)

In July we are looking at science, fact and fiction. Some of that 21st Century magic was what we needed with the March issue. Sorry we were late; but pleased you noticed we were missing. With luck we should be back on schedule. Keep your fingers crossed. ●

Pat

WHICH POEM? Howard Sergeant considers poetry for the classroom.

Although in this article I shall be concerned with the kind of poems which have most appeal to modern school-children, I would like to make it clear from the start that it is not my intention to dogmatize about the use of poetry in the classroom, and certainly not to attempt to instruct teachers how best to encourage a love of poetry in the children for whom they find themselves responsible. I am only too well aware that each classroom situation is different, and that there are many dedicated teachers who have spent years, sometimes in the most difficult circumstances, trying to communicate their own feeling for poetry. During the last 20 years or so the climate for poetry has changed in such a dramatic way that one might almost say that a revolution has quietly been taking place. More poetry is being read (and written) by old and young alike; more poetry is being made available to the public; more people are attending poetry readings throughout the country; more awards are being made for poetry and more poetry festivals are being held than ever before. It would seem that poetry is in a far more flourishing state than at any other time in this century. I happen to believe that, by developing new ways and means of encouraging creative expression and appreciation and by providing an atmosphere in which real learning can take place, teachers have played a very important part in bringing about such a change in public response to poetry.

Nor is it very meaningful to compile lists of attractive poems considered to be appropriate for children of different age groups, though some poems — Eliot's *Macavity*, for instance — seem to be popular with most children for different reasons. Children are individuals and just as adults have varying likes and dislikes, so have children, and it is often enlightening to find out what thought and behaviour patterns lie behind their attitudes (this may have little to do with 'literary criticism' or 'assessment of value' in the adult sense of these terms). It may be true that highly sophisticated poems are unsuitable for younger children, but some of these poems communicate at more than one level, and I have at times been surprised by the capacity for understanding by children of 8 to 10. On the other hand, few authorities would seriously recommend nursery rhymes for older children; yet I have had some fascinating sessions with 14-year-olds exploring the hidden meanings and camouflaged satire of such rhymes as *Little Jack Horner*, *Sing a Song of Sixpence*, *Mary Mary, There Was an old Woman who Lived in a Shoe*, and *Ring a Ring a Roses*, and relating the themes to history in a practical manner. The guiding principle seems to be that one should not cling too fiercely to preconceived notions about what will or will not appeal to children of particular ages.

I shall, therefore, concentrate on what I have learned from my own experience of working with children and I shall not attempt to lay down any hard and fast rules about it, leaving it to the discretion of readers to take what they may find helpful. In the first place I try to avoid giving the impression that I am involved in anything so portentous as a 'poetry lesson' or 'poetry reading', with all they may imply, though I may well have been given a build-up before I arrive at the school. My initial task, then, is to set up some kind of valid relationship with the children, and since I am seldom at any school for more than a day, I have to work very quickly and may sometimes adopt unconventional methods of establishing the kind of relationship needed. Here, regular teachers have a tremendous advantage over me; on the other hand, I am not troubled by any problems of maintaining discipline or thinking about continuity. Obviously, I know from previous experience that some poems are more successful than others with different age groups generally, but whilst keeping this at the back of my mind, I try to let my choice of poems for each separate occasion be decided by the discussion which follows, making the utmost use of the special interests of the children in question. If one is fortunate there may even have been some public event, some extraordinary change in the weather, some item of local news, or there may be some incident in the classroom which may provide the lead and give one something on which to build. In other words, instead of going systematically through a pre-selected group of poems, I endeavour to let the poems fit naturally into each learning situation as it develops. More often than not I find that this is a matter of maintaining a proper balance.

In deciding what poems to read, I do not think that one should be unduly concerned with the reputation of the poets or with the 'great' poems of the past — children will gradually make their own judgements without being told what to think, though one may point out some of the factors to be taken into consideration. The important thing is that the poems chosen should have some relevance to the present age and to the environment of the children. 'Poetry is human experience come to life,' wrote Hugh MacDiarmid, the Scottish poet. One of the dangers in using old anthologies, or even some of the traditionally accepted poems for children, is that the experience described is so remote as to have little meaning for the child of today. Indeed, even some contemporary poets, when writing specifically for children, tend to look back to their own childhood or that of their parents, rather than forward to the modern child's environment.

When I was compiling my anthology of poems 'for the youngest', *Happy Landings*, I found scores of poems about going to bed by candlelight or encounters with nannies, etc. but hardly any about, say, space travel, so I sat down and wrote the following poem:

SOFT LANDINGS

Space-man, space-man,
blasting off the ground
with a wake of flame behind you,
swifter than passing sound.

Space-man, ace-man,
shooting through the air,
twice around the moon and back
simply because it's there.

Space-man, place-man,
cruising through the skies
to plant your flags on landscapes
unknown to human eyes.

Space-man — race, man,
scorching back to earth —
to home and friends and everything
that gives your mission worth.

I have no illusions about the quality of this poem, and I would hardly place it amongst the best I have written, yet it has proved to be my most popular poem and has been anthologised over and over again for children, largely because it seems to meet a need. It will be observed that I have adopted a rhyming pattern for the poem. Although there is a tendency amongst contemporary poets to discard rhyme, it is my experience that younger children at least enjoy a definite rhythm and feel more at home with some kind of rhyme (this is not to suggest that they should be taught to *write* in this way only).



Illustration by Desmond Clover to 'My Mother saw a Dancing Bear' from *Happy Landings*.

I feel very strongly that we have to avoid giving our children the impression that poetry has little bearing upon life as we know it. Nothing could be further from the truth. The best poets are always deeply concerned with human experience in all its astonishing variety. That is, with everything that affects our lives, the little things which take up so much of our attention every day, as well as the big issues which force themselves upon us sooner or later; the moments of lightheartedness and fun as well as the times of emotional stress. In fact, they write poems about everything which arouses their interest, from spiders to spaceships, from cats to catastrophes.

We must always keep a place in our programmes for humour, light verse, mildly satirical verse, and even nonsense poems. Life, at any age, can be such a serious and often frustrating business, that we need humour as a sort of safety-valve to help us keep a sense of proportion. If we can see the funny side of a situation when things go wrong, we can retain our balance and, in really desperate situations, our courage; and since humour is best when shared, it helps us to communicate with other people. The satirical verse of Thomas Hood (such as 'Mary's Ghost', with its new relevance for an age of transplants), James Reeves's *Prefabulous Animiles*, Eliot's *Old Possum's Book of Practical Cats*, 'I Had a Hoppopotamus' by Patrick Barrington, 'The Dinosaur' by Bert Leston Taylor, *Rabbiting On* by Kit Wright, and verse by Ogden Nash, Spike Milligan and Roger McGough, all provide excellent material as a starting point.



One of Christopher Corr's powerful illustrations, 'In Memory of Steve Biko,' from *How Strong the Roots: Poems of Exile*.

Since many children have pets, a useful theme for discussion which involves poetry eminently suitable for younger children is that of animals, and here there is plenty of choice for most anthologies for children include some poems about animals, from Eleanor Farjeon's 'Cats Sleep Anywhere', Geoffrey Dearmer's 'The Giraffe', to Charles Causley's 'I Saw a Jolly Hunter' (a special favourite). For the middle school and older children the animal poems of D.H. Lawrence (such as 'Snake', 'Kangaroo', and 'Mountain Lion') have great appeal. Nor should attention be confined to the more superficial aspects of caring for animals — we may well find ourselves with animals in zoos and circuses, the hunting of animals and the killing of seals.

Other subject areas are those of 'our relations', 'people', 'town and country' and 'the supernatural'.

It will be seen that my own methods will often include a thematic treatment of poetry, though not inevitably so, but it does help children to see all round a given subject and widen their own perspectives. It may also lead to projects of one kind or another making use of a whole range of poems selected by children themselves. Coming back to the matter of differing age groups, I have always grouped the poems in my anthologies into broad subject areas, but within the separate sections I have attempted to arrange the poems roughly in a graded presentation to cater for differing capacities of children, whilst providing range and variety, as well as contrasting approaches to the subjects. ●

MEET HOWARD SERGEANT

Now freelancing after many years as a full-time teacher, Howard Sergeant is the founding editor of *Outposts* poetry magazine which, founded in 1944, is the longest-living independent poetry magazine in the UK, and perhaps in the world. Born in Yorkshire, he seems to have spent most of his time outside teaching in giving readings or running poetry workshops in schools, colleges and universities throughout the country, and in the words of the critic A. Alvarez has 'probably done more consistently to encourage poetry than any other editor in the country.' He has edited many collections of poetry for children of different age groups, the last being *For Today and Tomorrow* (Evans), and his anthology *How Strong the Roots: Poems of Exile* will be published in June. His own *Selected Poems* (Fuller D'Arch Smith) appeared earlier this year. His publications include three volumes of poetry, three volumes of criticism, and he has edited or co-edited over 50 anthologies of poetry for various publishers. He is a judge for the Gregory Awards, and in 1981 will be adjudicating poetry at the Cheltenham, Stroud, and Hastings Festivals.

He was awarded the MBE for services to literature in 1978, won the Henry Shore Award for poetry in 1979, and the Dorothy Tutin Award for services to poetry in 1980.

Anthologies edited by Howard Sergeant

Happy Landings (poems for the youngest)
Evans, 0 237 35190 0, 70p (pb)

The Swinging Rainbow (poems for the young)
Evans, 0 237 44961 7, £2.50 (hb), 0 237 44962 5, 85p (pb)

Evans Book of Children's Verse (9-13 years)
Evans, 0 237 44524 7 (hb) — out of print but try libraries

For Today and Tomorrow (13-15 years)
Evans, 0 237 44788 6 (hb) — also out of print

How Strong the Roots: Poems of Exile (13-15 years)
Evans, 0 237 45559 5, £3.95 (hb) — due in June 1981

Other Anthologies to be recommended

The Children's Book of Comic Verse
Chosen by Christopher Logue, Batsford, 0 7134 1528 2, £5.95

Thrills and Spills, poems of courage and skulduggery.
Collected by Zenka and Ian Woodward, Evans, 0 237 44990 0, £4.95 (hb)

Invitation to English, Book 2 (primary and middle schools)
Edited by Mike Woolman and Ham Andrews, E.J. Arnold, 0 560 04107 1, £1.45 non-net

Knock at the Door
Edited by Jan Betts, Ward Lock, 0 7062 4029 4, £5.95
Accompanying cassette tape, 0 7062 4047 2, £3.65

Teacher's Book 1: Water, Machines, Toys (topic anthology)
Edited by Jean Gilbert, OUP, 0 19 321280 3, £3.50

HOW TO FIND OUT ABOUT POETRY

The Poetry Society — organises many activities for children including the Annual Children's Poetry Competition, and the Poets in Schools scheme, sponsored by W.H. Smith. It's also a good source of information. Write to: The Education Officer, The Poetry Society, 21 Earls Court Square, London SW5 9BY. Telephone: 01-373 2551 or 01-373 7861.

The Resource Centre at Edge Hill College, Ormskirk, offers a poetry retrieval service. Contact Mrs Eason (Telephone: Ormskirk 75171).

The National Book League's reference collection includes all poetry books published in the last two years. You will also find the **Signal Collection of Poetry** at the NBL for reference. Book House, 45 East Hill, Wandsworth, London SW18 2QZ (Telephone: 01-870 9055).

A useful book is **Where's That Poem?**, compiled by Helen Morris, Blackwell (revised and enlarged edition 1974), 0 631 11791 1, £4.25.

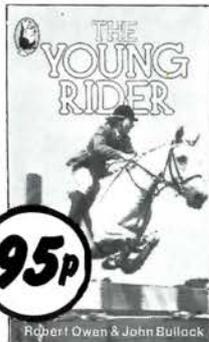
FILL YOUR SCHOOL WITH BEAVERS!



95p

John Christopher's much acclaimed fantasy trilogy (Age 11+) 'Each is an adventure story so enthralling that the idea of stopping to wait for the next volume hardly bears thinking about' *The Times*

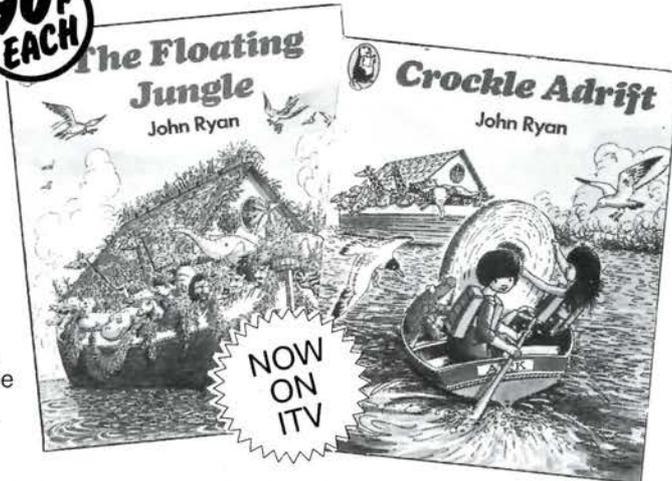
90p EACH



95p

The complete handbook for all riders and would-be riders (Age 8-12)

90p EACH

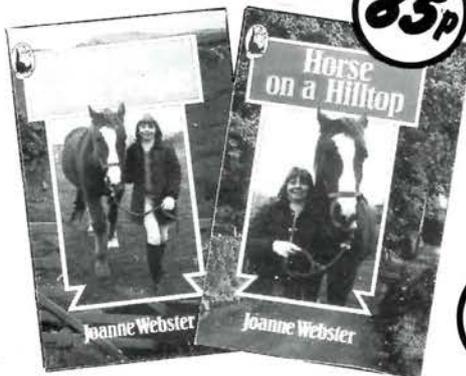


NOW ON ITV

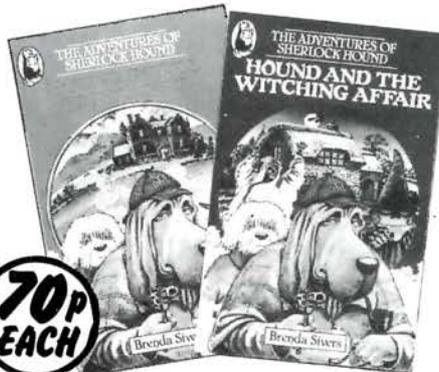
The adventures of Crockle, the baby crocodile, and friends on Noah's Ark. The latest in this hilarious series, illustrated throughout in full colour, from the creator of Captain Pugwash (Age 4-6)

A new series of enjoyable and unusual pony stories, that will captivate all horse-lovers (Age 8-12)

85p



70p EACH



Dozens of diverse lists, crammed with all sorts of useful and useless information — compulsive reading for 8- to 12-year-olds



95p

Packed with facts, advice, diagrams and illustrations, *the* book for all fishing enthusiasts

Introducing Sherlock Hound, the famous dog detective, and his faithful companion, Doctor Winston, in their amusing and unlikely investigations (Age 9+)

There are Beaver books on all kinds of subjects, from science to sport, poetry to pets and horror to history — and it's Beaver Books' Fifth Birthday in May 1981.

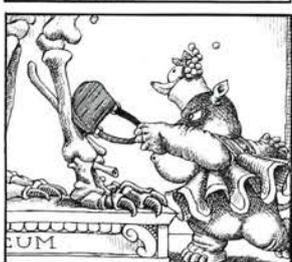
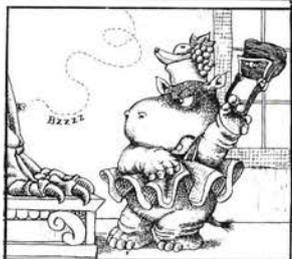
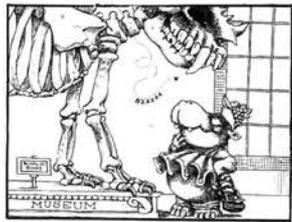


reviews

PAPERBACKS NURSERY/INFANT

Ah-Choo
Mercer Mayer,
Storychair,
0 552 50071 2, 50p

Oops
Mercer Mayer,
Storychair,
0 552 50069 0, 50p



Two (almost) wordless little books. **Oops** is about an accident prone lady hippo; **Ah-Choo** stars an elephant with a very powerful sneeze. Mercer Mayer's black and white line drawings are clear, precise and full of detail; new delights and jokes emerge as you pore over the page. As the storylines unfold the reader can anticipate with delighted horror the next dreadful accident. Great for sharing and good value for money. PT

Up and Up
Shirley Hughes, Picture
Lion, 0 00 661809 X,
90p

I have enthused about this brilliant, wordless comic strip story of a small girl's amazing, airborne adventure, in numerous places on countless occasions and there seems little left to say except that if by any chance you have missed it, make sure you get a copy now.

I know a large number of children who will be thrilled at the opportunity to buy one of their best loved books. JB



Moving Molly
Shirley Hughes, Picture
Lion, 0 00 661782 4,
85p

Moving house can be a most upsetting experience for small children and Molly is no exception. When her family moves from their town flat into the country, her brother and sister settle quickly but Molly — too young for school — takes longer to adjust. Then she finds an ideal place to play — the overgrown garden of the empty house next door. When new people move in, she fears for her secret place but peering through the fence, she comes face to face with two little twins. A warm, reassuring story for infants. JB

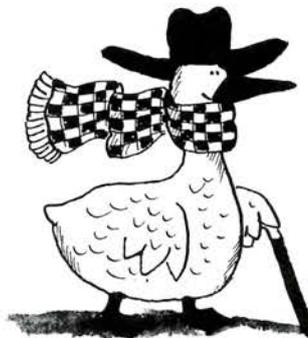
The Birthday Spell
Ronda and David
Armitage, Hippo,
0 590 70039 1, 85p

Fed up with her bossy family, Josie decides to put her favourite birthday present — a witch's costume and paraphernalia — to immediate use... 'I am a witch and I can make vanishing spells for BOSSY PEOPLE!' The seeming success of one spell almost spoils her birthday tea but all ends happily.

Those who have yet to make Josie's acquaintance are strongly advised to do so now: the hardcover edition, entitled **The Bossing of Josie**, became a great favourite with my infants last year. Highly recommended both as a storytime read aloud, and for individuals' private consumption, particularly when they are feeling 'got at'. JB

MacGooses' Grocery
Frank Asch, illustrated
by James Marshall,
Hippo, 0 590 72077 5,
75p

Mrs MacGoose, owner of a grocery store, tires of waiting



'Mr. MacGoose went for a walk'
drawing by James Marshall.

for customers and sitting on her new laid egg, puts pa in charge and goes for a walk. In turn each of the other members of the family absconds till, finally, the egg is left in charge of itself. Just when the neglected embryo is in danger of freezing to death, along come a pair of weasels who create havoc but inadvertently save the gosling-to-be.

An extended joke delivered in deadpan style with contrastingly droll pictures; it is very easy to read which in part accounts for the fact that the hardcover was in constant demand among my infants last year. JB

Benjamin's Dreadful Dream

Alan Baker, Picture
Lion, 0 00 661784 0,
85p

The myopic hamster Benjamin, suffering from a bout of insomnia, decides to appease his hunger pangs; but one way and another he gets rather more in the way of nocturnal treats than the grapes he intended. With its true to life, detailed pictures and easy to read text, this is a most inviting book for readers of any age. JB

Nice New Neighbours

Franz Brandenburg,
illustrated by Alik,
Hippo, 0 590 72060 0,
75p

At first glance this has all the marks of a good book for the in-between stage: attractive layout and illustrations, bubble talk, clear, well-spaced print and chapters; but the most important ingredient, an interesting story, is missing. This one is dull and over repetitive with the chapter headings arbitrarily dotted through the book. I wanted to like it but found I had to force myself to read to the end. JB

The Fun Guys, The Spring Time and The Moth Ball
0 7214 0676 9

The Fun Guys, The Hen Coat and The Ship Shape
0 7214 0677 7

The Fun Guys, The Rat Race and The Sky Lark

0 7214 0678 5

Peter Longden, Ladybird, 50p each
Ladybird still seem to be trying to 'out Hargreaves' Hargreaves; first it was **The Garden Gang** and now **The Fun Guys**. Each book contains two woodland stories featuring six — yes you've guessed it — FUNGI! The Fun Guys are said to have different characters but their only distinguishing feature seems to be their outward appearance. Their 'hilarious adventures' failed to raise even a glimmer of a smile and I found them totally inedible. Not to be recommended for any child's reading diet. JB

HAPPY FAMILIES

Miss Brick the Builder's Baby

Allan Ahlberg and Colin
McNaughton,
0 14 03.1242 0

Mr and Mrs Hay the Horse

Allan Ahlberg and Colin
McNaughton,
0 14 03.1247 1

Mrs Lather's Laundry

Allan Ahlberg and
Andre Amstutz,
0 14 03.1243 9



From **Nice New Neighbours**



Mr and Mrs Brick and Baby, from *Miss Brick the Builder's Baby*.

Master Money the Millionaire

Allan Ahlberg and
Andre Amstutz,
0 14 03.1246 3

Mr Buzz the Beeman

Allan Ahlberg and Faith
Jaques,
0 14 03.1244 7

Mr Tick the Teacher
Allan Ahlberg and Faith
Jaques,
0 14 03.1245 5
Puffin, 80p each
Also available as
Kestrel hardbacks,
£2.50 each.

In this the second batch of *Happy Families* — as was the case with the first set — three titles are much better than the rest. My favourite is *Miss Brick the Builder's Baby* in which this tough little character seems bent on becoming a demolition expert rather than following in mum and dad's footsteps, despite the efforts of all her relations. Both story and pictures are hilarious; the illustration of the *Baby Show* had one group of infants reduced to helpless laughter.

The other stories which have proved most popular are *Mrs Lather's Laundry*, where, fed up with washing the usual items, Mrs Lather takes in more and more outlandish 'washing'; and *Mr and Mrs Hay the Horse*, about a highly unconventional husband and wife pantomime partnership who are a constant source of embarrassment to their children — 'our mum and dad are a horse' — until they save the day at the school Christmas show.

Less successful are: *Master Money the Millionaire*, about a boy who is always digging up treasure; *Mr Tick the Teacher*, whose children's acting prowess saves his small village school from closure; and *Mr Buzz the Beeman*, which employs a folk tale device but is too close to *The Elephant and the Bad Baby* for comfort.

All the books are well designed and attractively illustrated; one aspect of the illustrations in *Mr and Mrs Hay* did worry me though — the characters appear as caricatures of racial types and the golliwog clown should not have been included. The continued aversion to the use of contractions is my only other reservation. Despite this, the books have proved successful with children whose ages range from five to twelve.

JB

INFANT/JUNIOR

Carrie Hepple's Garden

Ruth Craft and Irene
Haas, Picture Lion,
0 00 661927 4, 90p

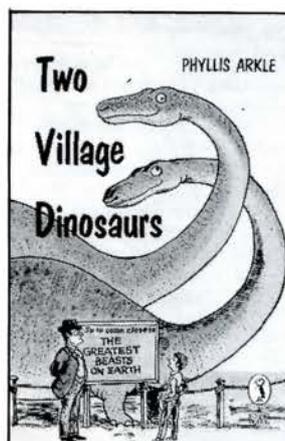
Three children venture into Carrie Hepple's garden after their ball. But when the old woman — known for her whiskery hair and glittering glare — shows them some of her secrets, their initial mood of daring turns to one of respect and wonder. I am always very wary of stories told in rhyme but this one is more successful than most, and the soft, muted illustrations (on green paper) add to the feeling of mystery created by the text.

JB

Two Village Dinosaurs

Phyllis Arkle, Puffin,
0 14 03.1304 4, 75p
The many fans of *The Village Dinosaur* will be delighted to see this sequel in paperback at last. Out of the old chalk pit comes *another* dinosaur: Sauro, companion for Dino, already well established in the village. The Parish Clerk's gloomy predictions are never quite realised as the dinosaurs, with young Jed in close attendance, create chaos and then save the day in a series of events in the life of the village. Good for reading aloud, or for those getting going on their own.

PT



Ursula Bear

Sheila Lavelle, Beaver,
0 600 20072 8, 75p

Two stories, *Ursula Bear* and *Ursula Dancing*, (originally published in the *Hamish Hamilton Gazelle* series) about a small bear-mad girl who discovers in a book of magic spells (in the library!) 'How a little girl can turn into a bear'. The results provide some pleasant fantasy which keeps one foot always firmly on the ground. The stories start strongly; complication and satisfying conclusion follow swiftly. Useful for inexperienced readers, especially if they are girls or like bears.

PT

JUNIOR/MIDDLE



The Devil's Storybook

Natalie Babbitt,
Carousel,
0 552 52128, 0, 80p

An unusual collection of ten moral tales about the Devil, his attempts to do mischief in the world and some of the problems he has with Hell and its inhabitants. There's Mr Bezzle whose ashes get mixed up with some from a pig who then becomes his constant

companion. 'Just do something,' said Bezzle. 'I really don't want to spend Eternity stomach to stomach with a pig.' 'I'll ask around,' said the Devil. 'No doubt we can figure things out.' There's the minor demon who yearns to grow roses: 'Roses are entirely out of the question — you'll have to plant sensible things. Like henbane or hemlock.'

The style is racy, the stories beautifully constructed, often with a neat twist at the end. There's lots to smile at but also (as you'd expect from the author of *The Search for Delicious*) something to think about too.

PT

Beezus and Ramona

Beverly Cleary, Puffin,
0 14 03.1249 8, 85p
This is the third book in the series — Ramona is four and Beezus is nine — and it's mostly about Beezus's very mixed feelings about her little

sister who is noisy, naughty, demanding and frequently exasperating. Is she really supposed to love her all the time?

Life with the Quimbys (not so different from many families here) in all its moods is captured with accuracy and humour, and the final note is of security and reassurance. Highly recommended for all older sisters (or brothers).

PT



Arthur and the Great Detective

Alan Coren, Puffin,
0 14 03.1345 1, 80p

Arthur and the Bellybutton Diamond

Alan Coren, Puffin,
0 14 03.1346 X, 80p
Fresh from his triumphs as *The Lone Arthur*, *Arthur the Kid*, *Klondike Arthur* (and several more) Arthur William Foskett, famous boy detective, meets up with (who else?) Sherlock Holmes on board an Atlantic liner. When Gilbert and Sullivan (also on board) lose the manuscript of their new opera, Patience, what more natural than that Arthur and the Great Detective should work together. The second adventure is set in fog-covered London. Arthur (now living at 221A Baker Street) once again out-Holmes Holmes in solving the mystery of the missing diamond.

Number two is less successful than its predecessor but both are lively and full of verbal

humour. Much of it, though, is dependent on allusion — those who know their Conan Doyle (even from film and TV) will laugh more. The Arthur books had quite a cult following among ten-year-old boys when they first appeared from Robson a couple of years ago. Worth a try. PT



Tales of a Fourth Grade Nothing

Judy Blume, Piccolo, 0 330 26211 4, 95p
A must. Nine-year-old Peter describes episodes in the life of his little brother, Fudge (2½/3), which would count high as extenuating circumstances for a fratricide. There's the refusal to eat, the chaotic birthday party, playing

up on a shopping trip and in the cinema — and wait till you hear what he does to Peter's pet turtle. Lots of comedy, mixed with pathos as Fudge corners parental attention. Deceptively simple and easy to read, TV sit-com transposed to a book; signs are that, when kids are introduced to Judy Blume, she's as popular here as in the US. 9-13. SB

The Bungleweed

Helen Cresswell, Puffin, 0 14 03.1272 2, 95p
'73 Cresswell. Such late paperback publication suggests it rates low against her other work and certainly it's more static, less varied than some. Basically, it's about the problems caused when a giant plant overruns the Finches' garden, next door to Pew where Finch is the Head Gardener. Inevitably, this is invested with philosophical trappings about Life's miraculous possibilities but there's marginally less lyricism than in *The Beachcombers* or *Up the Pier* although, as usual, few concessions re vocabulary. Puffin catalogue 1981 doesn't list *The Nightwatchmen* and if her best can't stay in print, then alas *The Bungleweed*. For quiet, sensitive, able readers. SB

Napper Goes for Goal

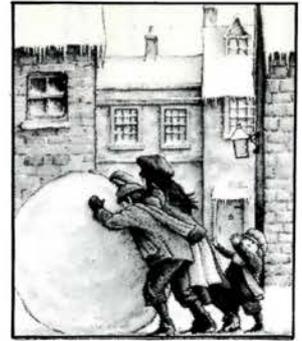
Martin Waddell, Puffin, 0 14 03.1318 4, 80p

I'm still not sure what *Napper Goes for Goal* is trying to achieve. The language, dialogue, expressions used by the kids, all date the action somewhere between *The Hotspur* and *Roy of the Rovers*. The characters, situations, plot (?), are thin and lacking in substance. The diagrams (so proudly boasted on the cover) are anachronisms — switching from modern 4-2-4 formations to old-fashioned WM positions with careless abandon. A sad waste of an idea, for lads can relate to a story about a school team, but, unfortunately, not this one. Even my soccer-crazy kids, bred on a diet of Liverpool success, who devour anything and everything on the subject, gave this the thumbs down. BB

The Snow House

Nora Wilkinson, Puffin, 0 14 03.1289 7, £1.25
I've a feeling that once discovered and tried this might make an excellent upper junior school storytime book. Certainly my young tester was enchanted by it.

Young Fred and his cousins try to save a colony of mice from the onslaught of Aunt Jen, who has arrived to run the house whilst his mother is at a sanatorium. One danger follows another and even the enchanting snow house is not the complete answer to their problems, especially when the



mouse circus man arrives in the hamlet.

There are echoes of many other stories here and the adults are all rather too jolly, but overall one is charmed by the little rodents and their guardian cat, but even more so by the concern and caring of their young human friends. DB



Illustration by Martin J. Cottam from: *The Snow House*.

SWINGS AND ROUNDABOUTS

poems by Mick Gowar



Here is city life, described in all the vividness and truth of a youthful voice — questioning, celebrating, shouting and singing. Anyone aged from 10 upwards will find in this book at least one poem they will never forget. 80pp Illus. £4.50 (00-184527-6)

Hear Mick read from *SWINGS & ROUNDABOUTS* on — May 20, 3.00-4.30 pm —

The Poetry Society 21 Earls Court Square London SW5

June 5, 4.30-6.00 pm — Cambridge Children's Poetry Week, at Fisher Hall

Collins

Full colour poetry picture books from Heinemann

Helen Oxenbury

TINY TIM

Verses for children chosen by Jill Bennett

Coming in September, a collection of funny, robust verses with bright, bold pictures. £3.95



Cynthia Mitchell

HALLOWEENA

HECATEE and

other rhymes to skip to illustrated by Eileen Browne

A book of catchy rhymes for children to skip to, read, chant and listen to. *HOP ALONG HAPPILY* and other rhymes for the playground is by the same poet and artist. £2.90 and £3.10



Satomi Ichikawa

FROM MORN TO MIDNIGHT Children's verses chosen by Elaine Moss and

UNDER THE CHERRY TREE Poems for children chosen by Cynthia Mitchell

Two first poetry books to treasure. Illustrated by the incomparable Satomi Ichikawa. £2.90 and £3.50

MIDDLE/SECONDARY

The Spuddy

Lilian Beckwith,
Sparrow, 0 09 91330 X,
85p

As dumb boy who befriends abandoned mongrel stories go, this is quite engaging with a fairly predictable discovery of voice at the end to off-set the tragic death of hound.

But it is very hard to decide for whom this book is intended. The cover and full-page illustrations suggest quite a young readership, but some of the references to the break-up of the marriage of the hero's parents and that of his seafaring friend Captain Jake (how about that for an original name?!), indicate an older audience. Certainly the density of the print on the page might deter younger readers. I'd be inclined to give it a miss in secondary bookshops. DB

The Lantern Bearers

Rosemary Sutcliff,
Puffin, 0 14 03.1222 6,
£1.50

A belated appearance in paperback of Rosemary Sutcliff's atmospheric novel of the dog days of the Roman presence in Britain. Considering that the original hardback appeared in 1959 (was it really that long ago?), the style and dialogue have travelled extremely well, tribute to the tight professionalism that hallmarks all Rosemary Sutcliff's work.

For those meeting the story for the first time, it can be thoroughly recommended at two levels. As a tense, exciting, sensitive adventure story for the ten to thirteen age range, and as a mine of well-researched detail and information on the chaotic period as the decaying Roman Empire retreated from Britain. Essential as background reading for project work on the Romans in Britain, no other children's author captures the flavour of the time as well. BB

Stars of Fortune

Cynthia Harnett,
Magnet, 0 416 89880 7,
95p

The Magnet paperback edition of Cynthia Harnett's superb tale of political intrigue set in the sixteenth century is a thoroughly recommended addition to every school library. First published in 1956, by the author of *The Wool Pack and Ring Out Bow Bells*, this is the first paperback edition of the book, also containing the original Harnett illustrations.

Life in Tudor England is brilliantly captured within these pages, entwined with the subtle heightening of tension and excitement throughout the drama of the plot to smuggle Princess Elizabeth Tudor to safety in Italy.

Returning to the author through this book, I was reminded by the spare, concise

style, continually moving the story forward, sustaining the reader's interest, of the elements that make the difference between a good children's story and so much of the material that is pumped onto the market today. BB

Cover Drive

Roy Brown, Granada,
0 583 30458 3, 85p
Slim crime stories can rarely be discarded so this warrants a trial. Fifteen-year-old Rod helps his taxi-driver Dad when he returns injured from his wheelman's role in a Post Office raid. After a crash, he's taken the loot and — unintentionally? — killed the gang's heavy. Morality/caution pull Rod one way, loyalty/pity tug the other. Rod's cricketing future provides 'a positive end' after Dad's capture. Inaccurate or inconsequential details and some rapid dating do less harm than a style condensed to opacity at times, the emphasis on emotions rather than excitement and hazy central characters. No better than 'Fair'. SB

Mystery of the Tower

Jeremy Burnham and Trevor Ray, Carousel,
0 552 52130 2, 85p
Don't be deterred by the flat cover of *Mystery of the Tower* because the story is one of the best of its genre that I've read for some while. Beginning with a sensitive

explanation of Gary's feelings after his parents split-up; father's attempts to relate, culminating in a trip to London; with the ensuing adventures in the Tower, parallel to the reconciliation of his parents. Nothing like as corny as that brief résumé makes it sound — the story is pacy, retains interest and makes imaginative use of the local colour provided by the history of the Tower of London. An excellent read for eevens and upwards. BB

Earthdark

Monica Hughes, Magnet,
0 416 21070 8, 95p
Sequel to *Crisis on Conshelf Ten* (see BFK 7); not one to offer anyone who hasn't already met the hero. Back on Moon, Kepler's readjustment problems bring quarrels with his fiancé, trouble with authority and — finally — mortal danger as he rumbles the Lemcon mining company's plot to ruin the colony's future. For a short thriller (115 pages), the action is slow to start — chapters 1-3 rely on involvement in Kepler's rebellion against lunar life although, subsequently, there's sufficient tension to sustain interest and counter potential anti-climax towards the end. Technical vocabulary and small print also ensure that it's Fans Only. SB

OLDER READERS

It
William Mayne, Puffin,
0 14 03.1174 2, £1.25

An important book no doubt, but like much of Mayne's other work for older readers, read mainly by adults. The dialogue here is very quirky in parts — 'Help yourself,' said her father, 'but don't mess on. And it's dinner time when we go, so you've to land on down for it.' I can see all but the

doughtiest reader abandoning the tale before too long if only because he finds the dialogue too much like hard work.

The core of this supernatural story is the possession of Alice by an unquiet spirit who will only be laid down after his sensitive young host and her family have suffered much and endured much. I found it a very gratifying read. DB

Find a Stranger, Say Goodbye

Lois Lowry, Granada,
0 583 30403 6, 95p
I strongly recommend this very intelligent and sensitively written book to anyone trying to engage the reading interest of older readers — most probably girls. Natalie Armstrong's search for her real parents, when she already has a very acceptable and loving set of adoptive parents, is related in a very absorbing, unsentimentalised way, which

leaves the reader, whether she can 'identify' with the problem or not, utterly sympathetic, chastened, too, no doubt, by the comprehension of the quality of loneliness of those around her and a realization of real identities that Natalie acquires by the end of her search. DB

PUFFIN PLUS — a new series

After the failure, in sales terms, of *Peacocks*, Puffin have rethought their approach to teenage books and now they're trying again.

Steve Bowles looks at the first batch in the new Puffin Plus series.

It's a fiction/non-fiction mix — some new, some reissued — setting the future programme's pattern. Mercifully, *Peacocks'* major peculiarities are cut so perhaps even wholesalers and booksellers will understand the new series' intentions — and rising sales must help us all

long term. But don't get over-excited. The Puffin Machine hasn't yet grasped that schools need a POPULAR series for the majority of kids. Few titles, if any, on the Puffin Plus schedule come anywhere near meeting that need. Westall, Peyton, Rowe Townsend,

Gardam, John Gordon, Peter Dickinson, Marjorie Darke — who'd not want their books paperbacked? However, this rich fare will tempt few without an enormous helping of 'bread and butter' titles to go with it and elitist 'Let-them-eat-Topliners' comments merit

an instant tumbrel to the shredding machine.

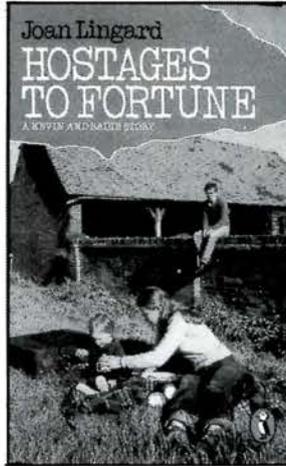
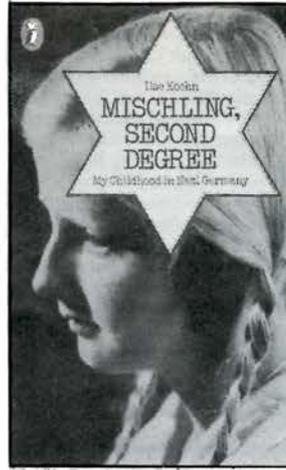
I can't say much about *The Motorcycling Book* (John Dyson, 0 14 03.1426 1, £1.10) and *Know Your Body* (Dorothy Baldwin, 0 14 03.1340 0, 90p). No doubt they will be skimmed



widely — even studied by enthusiasts — and, unlike some Peacock non-fiction, these subjects have a large potential audience. But I doubt if non-fiction will ever do much to change kids' reading habits. **Mischling, Second Degree** (Ilse Koehn, 0 14 03.1356 7, £1.25) is also non-fiction but autobiography is a special case. The Nuremberg Laws classify Ilse as a Mischling because her father's mother was born Jewish. They also mean a strategic separation for her parents until Hitler's defeat. Ilse, ignorant of her ancestry, suffers the usual education and Hitler Youth evacuation camps before returning to Berlin for the war's final phase.

Fascinating for details behind the stereotypes, for an amazing Mother Courage peasant grandmother and for description of life in a war-torn city. Though not particularly difficult to read, the book is long and the central section a little flat but many (girls?) will try it and, even if they don't finish it, reading the first few chapters will be a valuable experience.

Hostages to Fortune (0 14 03.1350 8, 95p) is the fifth — and, despite its inconclusive ending, the last? (d.v.) — of Joan Lingard's Kevin and Sadie books. (The others are being reissued with new Puffin Plus covers, though eccentrically, with the 'younger' first book, **Twelfth Day of July**, appearing last.)



Adults might be cheesed off with them but Kevin and Sadie, steady sellers, are a sensible choice for Puffin Plus — they're much less demanding than other new titles. **Hostages** sees the couple homeless again and lumbered with another delinquent McCoy over from Ulster. It's bitty and few elements develop properly so the action only has spasmodic punch. Still, a fair number — mainly girls — will whip through all five and, possibly more important, booksellers will know Joan Lingard's name. If Beaver's **Maggie** books are still about, Smiths etc might even build a teenage section around her.

Current plans, once again, show Puffin lacking the initiative and courage to break from the traditional children's publishing formulae which have failed so many in the past. Admittedly, the hardback firms' offerings don't help but, even so, they could do better. Maybe their nerves would be steeled by some backing for a more adventurous approach. Why not send a note to tell them what you think?

Other titles due out this summer include Jan Mark's **The Ennead**, Peter Dickinson's **Tulku**, Robert Westall's **The Devil on the Road** and John Rowe Townsend's **The Intruder**.

SHORT STORY ANTHOLOGIES

Collections of stories of ghosts, horror and mystery are much in demand in school bookshops and middle/secondary classrooms. Steve Bowles looks at some recent offerings.

Dominated by middle-class literati, children's publishing has absorbed years of complaint and still shows only occasional understanding of where common or garden kids are at. Examine these ghost, horror, mystery collections; material schools need in bulk. Take Lions' reissue, **Monster Museum** (ed. Hitchcock, 0 00 671873 6, 95p). The stories, originally written for adults, are thirty years old or more, sometimes lengthy — demanding by most schools' standards. Yet the original cover pitched the book at top juniors/early secondary kids for whom, in terms of readability, it's not very suitable.

Lions' new cover, however, corrects this, placing it firmly within the Young Adult range. No-one would say that some under-13s couldn't read or enjoy it, but its optimum use begins later. And, while the new cover wouldn't deter younger readers, the previous one certainly finished some older kids. The stories are fairly entertaining; don't miss the underrated Richard Parker's very short **Wheelbarrow Boy**.



On the left, the 1973 Armada Lion cover; on the right, the revamped cover of the 1981 reissue.

Lions have also reissued Hitchcock's **Spellbinders in Suspense** (0 00 671874 4, 95p) with a subtler cover emphasizing chills rather than drama. Here, the original wasn't at all bad and, if the collection didn't take off as expected, it might be down to the stories themselves, despite two classics (du Maurier's **The Birds**, Dahl's **Man from the**



South). The others don't often impress; good ideas get stretched too far or expressed ponderously and a few are very hackneyed. Pick readers carefully when recommending this.

But a third Hitchcock (**Witch's Brew**, Puffin, 0 14 03.1209 9, 80p) shows that this growing perception of audience make-up isn't by any

means universal. Authors include Robert Bloch, Lord Dunsany and Shirley Jackson but the book looks like an adventurous granny's present to a 10-year-old. Some interesting 6/8 pagers are worth investigation; don't bother with the longer selections. **Monster Makers** (ed. Haining, Knight, 0 340 25093 3, 95p) also wears a 'young' cover over sophisticated material, eight from Gollancz's hardback about scientists, their creations and attendant catastrophes. A historical approach — start with **Frankenstein** extract, progress to Asimov's **Robot AL76 Goes Astray** — means that awkward styles up front mask the more accessible pieces. Bloch's satirical **Dr Nork** and the Asimov might be useful but otherwise — dreary.

Last year's **12th Armada Ghost Book** (ed. Mary Danby, 0 00 691670 8, 75p) is standard for this useful, down-market series but I wouldn't bet that the switch from the early collections of reprints to original anthologies represents editorial decisions to better suit the books to their

junior/early secondary readership. After all, Armada don't show many encouraging signs elsewhere. They've produced the grossly titled **Sherlock Holmes Meets the Sussex Vampire**, a catchpenny collection of six Holmes tales, newly non-copyright (0 00 691885 9, 80p). Those wanting to read Conan Doyle and capable of it, might try Penguin's **Complete Sherlock Holmes** (0 14 00.5694 7, £2.95) but I suppose Armada's book is a cheaper way of showing how dull adult reading can be.

Barbara Ireson's collections *do* suggest an increasingly 'child-

centred' selection policy. She's always plundered Sorche Nic Leodhas and **The Obstinate Ghost** (Palmer/Lloyd, now out of print) for her books but the new **Ghostly Laughter** (Beaver, 0 600 20322 0, 95p) goes further, adding four Armada Ghost/Monster stories, one from Carousel's **Best of Shadows** and one from her own **Puffin Haunting Tales** to two Joan Aiken and Thurber's **Night the Ghost Got In**. I see no point in robbing other paperbacks so extensively — there's little here which a decent class library/school bookshop won't already have. Going for ghost

stories with straightforward styles is fine and funny spooks are a good idea, but surely editors should be more scrupulous? (Incidentally, the change in cover between first and second editions of **Haunting Tales** also says volumes about Puffin's understanding of their customers.)

The stories in **Spooks and Spirits** (ed. Margaret Hamilton, Knight, 0 340 25545 5, 85p) were all written for kids by the eight Australian authors. The ideas are well worn but at least the better stories are in the first half and fanatics (10-12)

should tackle it without much complaint. **Animal Ghosts** (ed. Carolyn Lloyd, Armada, 0 00 691814 X, 75p) is a new version of an old title with only two stories carried over. A couple of mouldy oldies here (Blackwood, Lafcadio Hearn) but most are new, varied and attractively short. It should go well — but what a pity it shares the crummy illustrations which Armada (and many other junior anthologies) seem to specialize in.

HARDBACK Pat Triggs looks at New Poetry Books

Looking at three out of the four newest collections a cynic might say that two are for kids and one is for children. Perhaps that response was kindled by reading John Loveday's introduction to his anthology **Over the Bridge**. But more of that later. Let us begin with the kids.

Swings and Roundabouts

Collins, 0 00 184527 6, £4.50

This is Mick Gowar's first collection of poems. For sure he'll be lobbed into the 'school of Rosen and McGough' and in that some of the poems are about family life and urban living and there is some similarity in tone in the opening of poems like **Dad's Garden**:

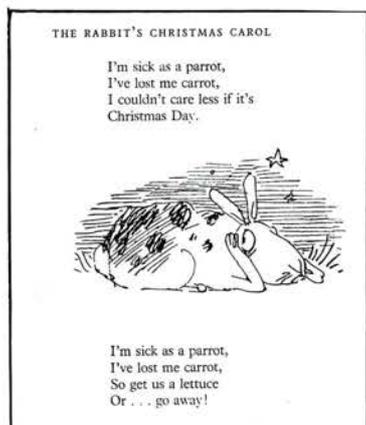
My Dad's very keen on gardening but it's gardening INDOORS

there's some excuse. But the range of theme, feeling and tone in this collection is wide from the slow moving grace and acceptance of **Haringey Sunday** which describes the old women gathering for their veg peeling ritual, to the heart-racing, desperate tension of **First Boyfriend**, the quietly pleased recognition of a changed relationship with a grown-up brother in **Launderette** and the darkness behind **November 3rd** — which reminded me of Philippa Pearce's story **The Great Blackberry Pick** in **What the Neighbours Did**. Lots on offer here for classrooms or personal browsers. Don't miss it.

Hot Dog and other poems

Kestrel, 0 7226 5722 6, £3.75

A long-awaited collection from Kit Wright complete with illustration from Posy Simmonds. If you liked **Rabbiting On** (Fontana Lions), you'll need to get this



The Rabbit's Christmas Carol' from **Hot Dog**, drawing by Posy Simmonds.

— or at least badger Penguin for the paperback. There are poems about Dad (lots), my sister, her boyfriend, Auntie Jean (who insists on kissing you):

a
**Whacking great
Smacking great
Wet one**

Granny, and of course Dave Dirt. There's also a splendid carpet salesman — Walter Wall. Lots of fun, lots of rhymes, some thoughtful moments. Worth having.

Over the Bridge

Kestrel, 0 7226 5742 0, £4.25

Puffin, 0 14 03.1402 4, 95p

Edited by John Loveday, this collection arose out of a series of readings by modern poets at Whitchurch School, Oxfordshire. The readings were to adult audiences but eventually John Loveday, who organised this 'poetry powerhouse', began to ask the poets to contribute work for a book for the children of the school. It was assembled over two years and on completion Kestrel agreed to publish it, simultaneously in hardback and paperback. The brief to the poets was 'poems that

might be enjoyed by some young readers of ten or eleven and yet were likely later to be included in books for adults'. Auden's words 'While there are some good poems that are only for adults, because they presuppose adult experience in their readers, there are no good poems which are only for children,' became the touchstone.

Has it succeeded? Well, not really. Some of the poets seem over-conscious of writing for children (certainly not kids) like Donald Campbell's **That Night**; others smack a little of poetry for poetry's sake — Robert Wells' **Woodman's Song** and Roger Garfitt's **Blue** for starters. There *are* some hits, for me John Wain's **Poem for Kids** and James Simmons' **Olive and Davy**. But it's a patchy affair. Certainly nothing to grab those not already willing to listen; but perhaps that was deliberate. At the launch John Loveday said he had deliberately excluded poets who write for 'the ready response' or the 'laugh' from the audience because in them there was more 'performance' than real poetry. Ho Hum! Sadly within this closed circle collection there's not a lot for the willing to bite on either. I'd buy the paperback for a few poems but for something with real staying power I'd go for

The Music of What Happens

BBC, 0 563 17864 7, £5.50

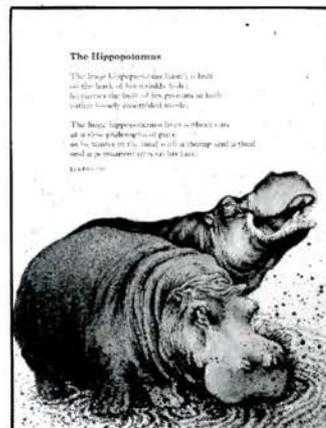
This is a collection of poems which first appeared in **The Listener** between 1965 and 1980. It's edited by Derwent May, the literary editor during that time. It's not particularly for children but there is much here that poetry liking children (or kids) or 'new adults' would relish — the three poems by Stevie Smith, for instance, **At the Dressing-Table Mirror** by George Szirtes, Norman MacCaig's **Gulls on a Hill Loch**. Many of these poems

have been published elsewhere since **The Listener** but you'll be an avid collector if you've got all of them. An investment for yourself which you can share with anyone.

Worth mentioning

A Second Poetry Book

Compiled by John Foster, OUP, 0 19 918137 3 (non net) and 0 19 918136 5, £3.50 (net)



'The Hippopotamus' from **A Second Poetry Book**.

Packed full of 'come-on' poems and beautifully presented with lots of different illustrations to suit the mood of the poems. A fitting companion to **A First Poetry Book** (not a good title) reprinted to coincide with publication. Excellent collections for junior/middle classes. It's a pity the covers look so babyish; you'd expect nursery rhymes.

For infants and lower juniors

When a Goose Meets a Moose

Evans, 0 237 45561 7, £5.95

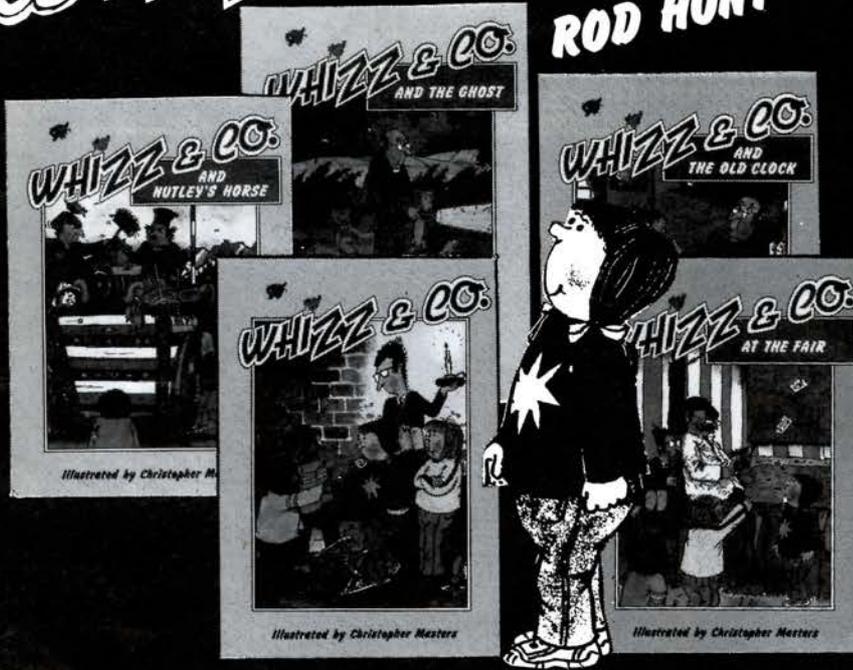
Poems for young children chosen by Clare Scott-Mitchell and illustrated by Louise Hogan. Over a hundred poems including old favourites (lots of Farjeon) and likely new friends. ●

NEW FROM Wheaton

WHIZZ & CO.

Full colour illustrations by Christopher Masters

ROD HUNT



Five delightful stories of the exploits of a little girl called Whizz and her gang. For children aged 6-10.

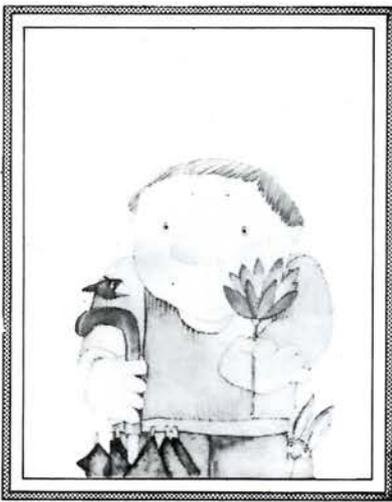
- | | | |
|---|---------------|-------|
| Whizz and Co. | | |
| 0 08-024963-9 | hardback | £2.95 |
| 0 08-024962-0 | laminated pbk | 90p |
| Whizz and The Old Clock | | |
| 0 08-024965-5 | hardback | £2.95 |
| 0 08-024964-7 | laminated pbk | 90p |
| Whizz and Co. At The Fair | | |
| 0 08-024967-1 | hardback | £2.95 |
| 0 08-024966-3 | laminated pbk | 90p |
| Whizz and Co. And The Ghost | | |
| 0 08-024969-8 | hardback | £2.95 |
| 0 08-024968-X | laminated pbk | 90p |
| Whizz and Co. And Nutley's Horse | | |
| 0 08-024973-6 | hardback | £2.95 |
| 0 08-024972-8 | laminated pbk | 90p |

Publication May

A. Wheaton & Co. Ltd,
Hennock Road, Exeter EX2 8RP

**PICTURE BOOKS
TO DELIGHT THE
CHILDREN...
AND ADULTS TOO!**

FROM BLACKIE



Smiling through the rain

THE BOY WITH THE UMBRELLA
Carme Solé Vendrell

It's a sad, rainy day — until a small boy with a big umbrella cheers everyone up by offering them flowers. Let him cheer you up too! The author's previous book, A BEAR IN THE AIR, was hailed by the *Evening Standard* as "the most exciting book in ages."

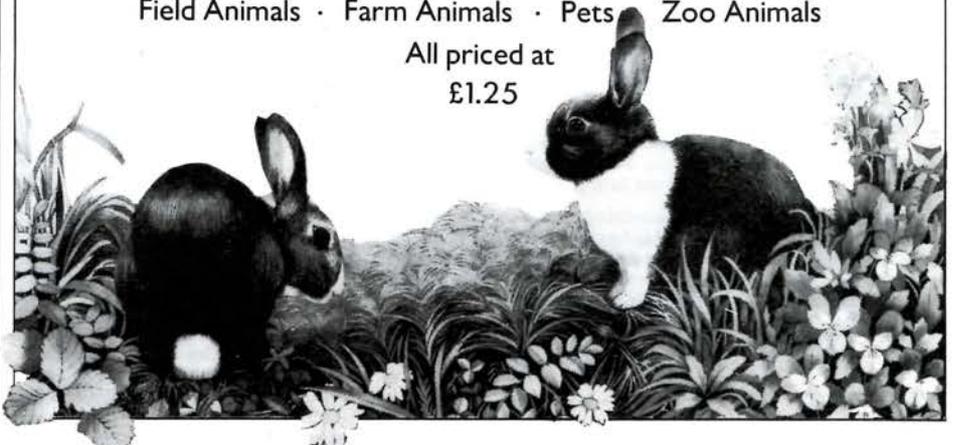
£3.50

BOARD BOOKS
Valerie Greeley

What a wonderful way for your child to learn to recognise different animals! This new range of exceptionally attractive board books depicts a wide range of animals in their various surroundings.

Field Animals · Farm Animals · Pets · Zoo Animals

All priced at
£1.25



A MOVEABLE FEAST

What do you know about James Roger Diaz and Tor Lokvig? Not much? Well, look carefully and you'll see their names on dozens of new titles currently finding their way into bookshops: Jan Pienkowski's *Haunted House* and Robert Crowther's *Most Amazing Hide-and-Seek Counting Book*, for two. Jim Diaz and Tor Lokvig are Paper Engineers and they work for Intervisual Communications Incorporated (ICI), the American Company that almost single-handed is responsible for all those 'pop-ups' which are 'popping-up' from so many publishers.

You can't do a course in Paper Engineering (yet) — you learn the art by doing it — and there are only a handful of them in the world. But they have an interesting ancestry. Today's mini-flood of moveable books is a revival. The first mechanical books appeared in the 1850's and from then until the first World War they enjoyed enormous popularity. Dean and Son and Raphael Tuck and Son in this country were the pioneers; but it was two German artists, Ernest Nister and Lothar Meggendorfer who made the last twenty years of the nineteenth century the golden age of moveables. From the start the books had had pull tabs, fold-out three dimensional scenes and panoramas but Meggendorfer's scrupulous attention to drawing, colour and printing as well as his inventiveness — one pull of a tab and two or three characters would be set moving — made his inventions special.

Two of his most famous books *The Doll's House* and *The International Circus* are not so much pop-ups as fold-outs. *The Doll's House* opens up into a four feet long series of three dimensional scenes, including a shop, a living room and a kitchen. *The International Circus* opens into a semi-circle — half a circus ring with six acts including acrobats, clowns and horses: Miss Clara Springel, apparently suspended in mid air, flies towards a hoop held aloft by a clown with a world-weary expression. Each character, whether spectator or circus performer, wears a different expression. It's a masterpiece indeed and a first edition is in the collection of the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York. Meggendorfer had a great sense of humour, one glance at the circus orchestra's faces shows that: the cymbal player has his jaw tied up for toothache, the cellist is gazing at his music as if he can't believe what he sees, the second violin is obviously thinking about something else. He also loved children and knew what would make them laugh. *Trick or Treat* is full of 'transformations': teacher is writing on the blackboard and behind him his pupils are fighting, playing games, falling about. One pull of the tab, teacher has turned round and rows of boys are dutifully writing in silence.

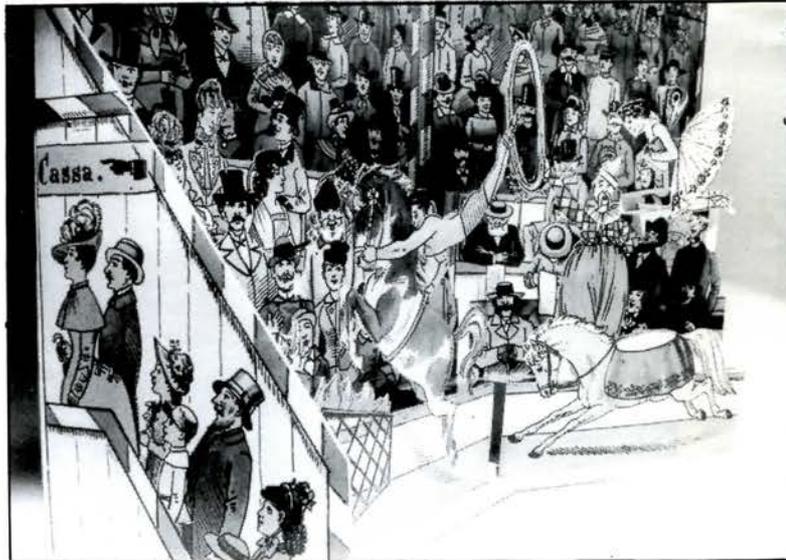
These books were bought by parents as entertainment for the whole family. Many still exist, well preserved, for they were clearly not subject to much unsupervised child use, rather put on a top shelf and taken out on Sundays. With the first World War and economic difficulties, pop-ups disappeared.

There were some cheap comic book creations (Pinochio, Tarzan) in the 1930's, but with one exception no moveable books of any quality were produced anywhere in the world until the nineteen fifties. The exception was *The Magic Boat* which appeared in the twenties. It's interesting not only because of the mechanics but because it's obviously intended that the child reader should join in and learn through playing. Different scenes appear through the windows of the house as you pull the tab through Morning, Afternoon, Evening and Night; you can make six different stories by making different sets of words appear in the holes; a card with cut-out squares placed over a page at different angles makes different 'sets' appear. The creator of this imaginative book was Tom Seidman-Freud. She was actually Martha Seidman-Freud, niece of Sigmund, but she liked the idea of using a man's name.

There is a direct link between all these books and those like *Haunted House*, in the form of Wally Hunt, white-haired, slow-talking, fast-thinking Californian, now just turned sixty. Twenty years ago he was just beginning to collect antique books. At the same time he was looking to get out of advertising into the international market. Why not produce pop-ups? Various projects (including involvement with the Roger Schlesinger pop-ups which appeared here in the mid-sixties) led to him starting up his own company again in 1973. That company, Intervisual Communications Incorporated, now produces 70% of all the 'quality moveables' (Wally Hunt's phrase) in the world and deals with over one hundred publishers. Their books have appeared in 17 languages in 37 countries. We asked Wally Hunt how it was done.

'There are two ways. We can conceive a book, produce it and sell it to publishers world-wide. Or a publisher will come to us and we work with them. The artist and our paper engineers work together. ICI is responsible from finished artwork to the point of publication. We're actually packagers.' They also help to set up international co-editions — that means, for instance, that an American publisher and a British publisher will both publish the book. The result is that the price of books can be kept down because so many are produced.

What is a paper engineer? 'He's an artist who can work with paper



Miss Clara Springel flies through the air in Meggendorfer's *The International Circus*

sculpture but make it fold. He makes it work mechanically, work economically and work a thousand times. There are only a few people in the world who can do this. Each one has to learn it from a master. Twenty years ago one genius, Ib Pennick, really advanced the state of the art.' Tor Lokvig, who worked on *Haunted House*, started with ICI when he was seventeen and learned his craft from Pennick, who is now freelance. The paper engineer and the artist have to work closely together. 'There has to be a great deal of give and take — very often the artist wants the Taj Mahal, we have to have something that is practical to produce.'

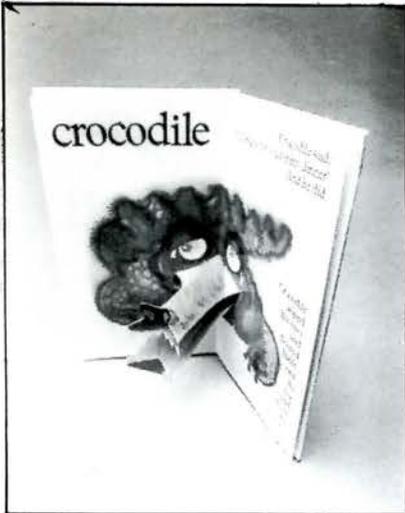
Production is the final stage. The secret says Wally Hunt is 'sophisticated technology in conjunction with low cost labour.' He found that combination in Singapore and Colombia. If you look at a pop-up book, you can bet it was produced in Cali, Colombia. The pages of the books are printed on 'million dollar presses', die cut and assembled by hand — only the cover is machine made. This process involves teams of women folding, inserting tabs into slits, connecting pivots, and making the all-important glue points *exactly* in place. Wearing white smocks and gloves they sit at long tables arranged row on row. Each girl works on two or four pages, learning the moves for that process. In Colombia there are about 1,000 workers, all on piece work. A first production run of a book may be 150,000 copies. The whole process from concept to shipment takes about twelve months.

Some of the books produced have been reproductions of the classics by Meggendorfer and Nister (see list). Kestrel's *The Doll's House* has sold 70,000 copies. Coming this month from Benn is *Trick or Treat* and also *The Magic Boat*. Susan Benn found a copy of it in an attic and showed it to Wally Hunt. He was delighted to see it (the plates from the original were destroyed during the war) and to be involved in giving it back to children.

Increasingly current picture book artists are being drawn to pop-ups. This year we have had Eric Carle's *The Honeybee* and *the Robber*, a book with a story and lots of information (like *The Hungry Caterpillar*) as well as ingenious mechanics — the bear going cross-eyed while trying to knock the bee off his nose convulses most children.

What's it like being involved in producing a pop-up? We talked to Jan Pienkowski and Robert Crowther.

Jan Pienkowski had a huge success with *Haunted House*. Since then he's done *Dinner Time*, and *Robot*, which is due out this autumn. Unlike most artists he has been to Los Angeles to work with the paper engineers and to Colombia to see the production process. Wally Hunt found him 'marvellous'. He has an extraordinary creative sense of



Pienkowski's crocodile from **Dinner Time**.

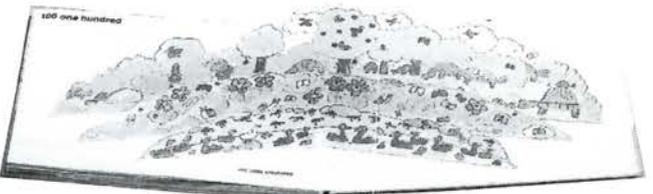
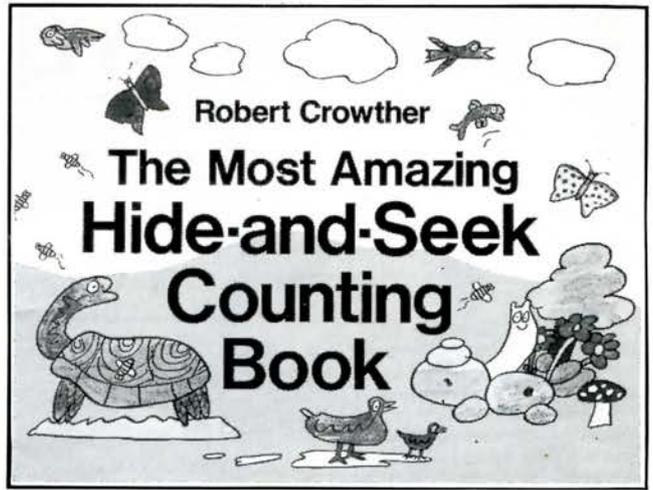
Jan Pienkowski, courtesy of Penguin Books

dimension. He not only did the artwork but came up with some very imaginative mechanics.' For Jan his visits are simple necessity. 'Communication is the big problem — telex, phone, letter. It's so much simpler across a table.' He'll go to Colombia again for **Robot**. 'It's a very anxious-making stage. When we go, we've got a hand-made dummy and it works. But it's been made with loving care and that prototype has to be broken down into various jobs that 100 girls can do on an assembly line.' Often it has to be re-thought on the spot, minor modifications have to be made for practical reasons. Someone says, 'How about if we do it like this.' Jan likes to be there when the decisions are made.

'It's more like putting on a show than anything else. I'm the director, the producer is the publishers — they say, "You can't do that, it's too expensive." The actors are the paper engineers. I ask them to do something and they say, "I can't do that, but I can do this." Going to Colombia is like going on tour. The stage is six inches shorter, you can't fly the scenery, the lights are different. You have to adapt!'

Robert Crowther became a paper engineer in 1973, ahead of the trend, when he made **The Most Amazing Hide-and-Seek Alphabet Book** as part of the graphic design course at the Royal College of Art. He decided to do a moveable book for practical reasons. 'I thought if I animate the animals they won't notice that the drawings aren't so good.' He learned how to do it by trial and error and looking down the back of Roger Schlesinger pop-ups. He was limited by the shapes of the letters as to how much he could hide behind them; and the letters also restricted which animals he could use — 'It pretty well had to be N for newt.' He tried to get the movement as near as possible to the natural movement of the animals — a koala comes down from the tree branch which is the outward stroke of the K; a mouse scuttles across behind the legs of the M.

Several publishers were 'interested' but nothing happened so he put it away. Several years later he sent it to Kaye Webb as an example of his graphics, hoping to get a commission for some book jackets. To his surprise Kestrel wanted to do the book. Intervisual Communications were set up and it was now economically possible. To date it has sold over 200,000 copies and Robert has just 'converted' it into Italian and German.



Cover and double spread from **The Most Amazing Hide-and-Seek Counting Book**, by Robert Crowther.

At the moment he's working on a 'red hot idea' for a book which should, with luck, be out in 1982. He enjoys the subtleties and the precision of paper engineering, but he's not a team man like Jan Pienkowski. You feel he'd really like to hand assemble every book himself. He also fears the pop-up bubble will burst if there are too many books. Wally Hunt doesn't agree. 'There will always be a market for classic books. We've created another form of book. With more co-ordination between the creative artist and the mechanics, we can get more than just novelty. The sky's the limit.'

Jan Pienkowski is working on **Robot** with Jim Diaz, ICI's leading paper engineer, whom he describes as 'brilliant'. 'Working with plastic and paper we're on the threshold of a revolution in terms of dimension. But we're nudging the limits in terms of what you can cram into two pages.' They are working on even bigger paper sculpture figures than the bathroom monster in **Haunted House** and that had antennae a foot long. They've got delayed action movements, sequences. You pull a tab and different things happen. Jim Diaz is not deterred by thoughts of limits. Says Jan, 'If you've got an idea for a mechanic where a mouse runs in and a woman jumps on a chair, Jim will come and make the chair break as well.' ●



From **Trick or Treat** by Meggendorfer



Robert Crowther at work, courtesy of Kestrel Books

This March **The Most Amazing Hide-and-Seek Counting Book** was published. 'Part of me thinks it's not as good as the alphabet book. That was more about layout and design; this relies more on illustration, and there are only twelve chances to surprise people instead of twenty-six. Still it's growing on me.' He likes surprising people and working things out for himself. He sent off the roughs with his ideas for the counting book to ICI. Then a series of white card dummies flew back and forth across the Atlantic. He didn't go to Los Angeles or meet Jim Diaz. 'They know so much. When I work it's like rediscovering the wheel. I'm still learning. But I like to do my own mechanics.'

The Doll's House
Lothar Meggendorfer, Kestrel,
0 7226 5534 7, £3.95

A Day in the Zoo
Anon, Kestrel, 0 7226 5706 4,
£4.25

The International Circus
Lothar Meggendorfer, Kestrel,
0 7226 5647 5, £3.95

Trick or Treat
Lothar Meggendorfer, Benn,
0 510 00110 6, £3.50

The Magic Boat
Tom Seidman-Freud, Benn,
0 510 00104 1, £3.50

The Honeybee and the Robber
Eric Carle, Julia MacRae,
0 86203 013 7, £4.50

The Most Amazing Hide-and-Seek Alphabet Book
Robert Crowther, Kestrel,
0 7226 5314 X, £4.50

The Most Amazing Hide-and-Seek Counting Book
Robert Crowther, Kestrel,
0 7226 5598 3, £4.50

Dinner Time
Jan Pienkowski, Gallery Five,
0 95072 140 9, £2.95

Haunted House
Jan Pienkowski, Heinemann,
0 434 95635 X, £4.95

Robot
Jan Pienkowski, Heinemann,
0 434 95643 0, £5.95 approx.
(in September).

Authorgraph No.8

David McKee

"Officially I was born in 1935 in Devon, but that's really when I first came to England. I must have been about five or six at the time. It's ridiculous, really — my parents were the only European couple in what was virtually a band of Afghan brigands. I don't really remember all that much about Afghanistan, except the heat, but whatever my parents were doing there it was obviously on the wrong side of the law. Nobody in the family ever really talked about it. It was all kept very quiet." In Devon he had a "straightforward, comfortable upbringing." He went to the local primary and then on to the grammar school, where he began to develop the interest in art which he had always had. "I was the original three-stone weakling, and very isolated as a child. It was the usual thing when you're not very well, you do something like draw all the time. In fact I wasn't really ill. It was more a sort of general loitering. Everybody used to send me out on long walks with a pencil and a pad. They used to tell me to fill it. So I did."

From school he went on to Plymouth art college, two years national service, and a year at Hornsey art college. "I had a pretty old-fashioned training at college — we were always out sketching and drawing. I thought I'd be a painter, but you have to earn money to live, so I started selling one-off cartoons to all the main daily papers while I was still at college. He continued to sell cartoons after he left college, but didn't find the medium "satisfying". "I'd always told stories, so going into picture books just seemed natural. I thought, 'this looks interesting', so off I went."

He wrote and illustrated his first book — *Bronto's Wings* — and sent it off on spec to several publishers. It was in full colour, and the resultant rejection letters all stressed the costs of full colour printing. So he compromised, re-did it in two colours and sent it off again. Back it came. This time he "went the whole hog" re-did it in black and white and sent it off to Dobson Books. While *Bronto's Wings* had been flapping unsuccessfully round the London publishers, he had been writing and drawing his second book — *Two Can Toucan* — which he sent off to Klaus Flugge at Abelard. It was accepted and *Bronto's Wings* came into land at Dobson at about the same time. That was in 1964.

Perversely just as things were happening with his picture books, he went with his wife to Devon and "virtually retired" for three or four years. But once back in London books came regularly: the *Mr Benn* series, for Dobson, and the *Melric the Magician* series for Abelard. "It's nice doing a series because you can add bits and develop characters from book to book. In a way you can keep them alive, and you get curious yourself as to what's going to happen when you're working on a book."

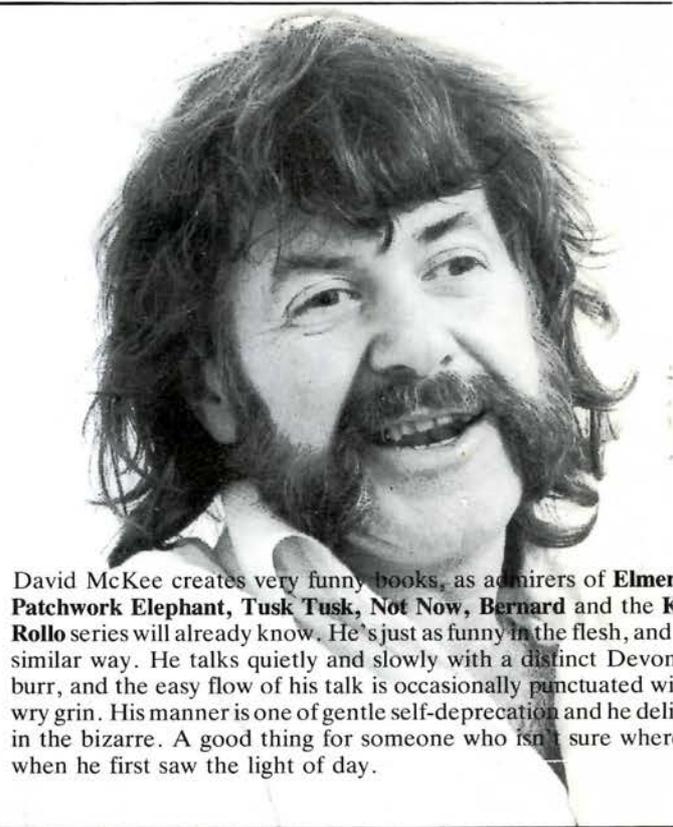


Melric listened to her brother's story. She tried a few spells but they were useless. She made him drink an evil-tasting brew but even that did not bring back his magic.

From *The Magician Who Lost His Magic*.

The McKee books have a very distinctive, quiet sort of humour, miles away from any form of obvious jokiness. "I like humour which is quieter, more surreal. It's like with my family; there are lots of things I'd like to know about my parents being in Afghanistan, but at the same time I don't want to know. I like the unknown, and in a way I like *not* probing into things. If everything is positive and scientific and known then there's nothing left for your mind to play with. More and more in the books that I'm doing now I like to leave things unsaid, so that there's more than one way of taking it. They're becoming more psychological, working on many levels. It is like surrealism and that's something that attracts me very much."

Mixing the normal and the bizarre is a feature of some of his 'problem' books. Not everyone likes it. *Tusk Tusk* and *Not Now, Bernard* were both heavily criticised: the first because it tackles the problem of racial intolerance in a humorous way; the second because it was said it would frighten children — after all, Bernard does get eaten by the monster. "It's interesting, because although *Tusk Tusk* was obviously about being black or white, it's about *all* differences. It's saying that unless you accept differences, then everybody's going to end up being the same, and that will be boring. A lot of Americans said they didn't want to touch it because they had enough of a colour problem without it. The Germans said I was talking about creating a master race!"

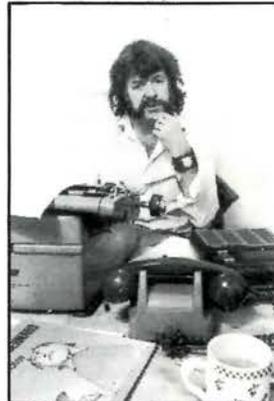
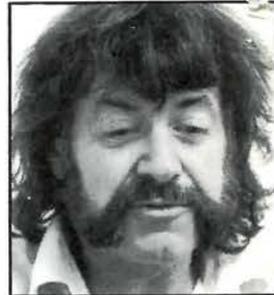
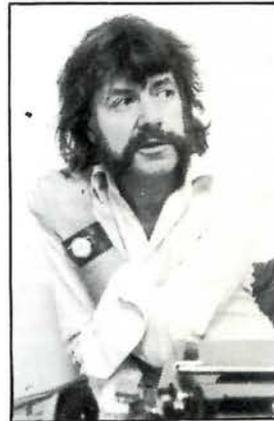


David McKee creates very funny books, as admirers of *Elmer Patchwork Elephant*, *Tusk Tusk*, *Not Now, Bernard* and the *King Rollo* series will already know. He's just as funny in the flesh, and similar way. He talks quietly and slowly with a distinct Devon burr, and the easy flow of his talk is occasionally punctuated with a wry grin. His manner is one of gentle self-deprecation and he delves into the bizarre. A good thing for someone who isn't sure when he first saw the light of day.

A lot of foreign publishers also expressed worry about *Not Now, Bernard*. "But in the main, kids tend to associate first with Bernard, then with the monster, which is the way I saw it. I've just seen an American review which is a real killer. It just ends up by saying 'not funny, McKee.'" Again, that wry grin. "That's quite nice really."

He thinks that he tends to do "problem books" because he had a "very moral upbringing." Apart from his parents' obscure activities in Afghanistan, his grandfather had run an illicit still in Scotland and smuggled empty sherry barrels out of the dockyard where he worked to fill them with illegal hooch. "My upbringing was moral despite all that — perhaps even because of it, and the moral stuff all came through my mother. I was a great reader of Aesop's Fables and the Bible as a child, and it's all still in me. I can't even cope with someone giving me too much change. I always give it back. And whether or not I'm aware of it at the time, all that just seems to come out in the books. I don't mean to push a moral, but even in the *King Rollo* books, which appear to be quite empty, the relationships are very interesting — as I've discovered since I wrote them. The cook is a sort of mother figure, and the magician is a sort of father figure. He's generally in the background, like most fathers. But when the king can't do something, like tie his shoelaces, the magician does it by magic. When a child's father does something like that for him it must appear to be like magic. I did it with a king because if you write about problems like learning to do up your shoelaces with a child as the main character, then immediately you'd be writing down. But if it's the highest possible person in the land with those problems, then it must be all right for a child to have them as well."

But, "I don't really think about kids much when I'm doing a new book. I



just do it the way it feels right. I suppose it's because I'm basically stupid or un-grown up that it usually works out right."

He's never had a problem finding ideas, quite the reverse. "When you're younger you think of all the places you'd like to go to, and you're sure you'll do it one day. Then you begin to realise that there are lots of places you'll never visit, just as there are lots of ideas you'll never actually do anything with. When you're working on an idea the next idea's always over your shoulder saying, 'For Christ's sake, hurry up and let's get on with it'. I suppose in a way the idea and what I'm actually doing in a book is — unfortunately — more important than how well it's written or drawn sometimes. I think a lot of the stuff I've done should have been better. But it's always been a case of getting on and doing it."

The present is "a very interesting period". He's taking stock. "I think I ought to be able to achieve more than I'm achieving. I suppose everybody thinks that, but I think you need to. I've somehow got to find out whether I'm right or wrong about it, and whether I can achieve extra." His workload and work-rate are already phenomenal so it's not quantity he's talking about, more responding to a lot of challenges. There's a new book which is going to be very surreal. It has a brief text illustrated in the normal way; but the illustrations include other silent stories which are open to different interpretations; some take place on only one page, others run over several pages or even the whole book. He's sure some of these stories will draw the same sort of criticisms as **Not Now, Bernard**. He's also made a commitment to film by setting up a production company with two friends — Leo Beltoft, an animator, and Clive Juster, a film editor. Their first series of **King Rollo** films has already been shown on BBC television and there are plans for working with other artists like Tony Ross. Several years ago when David McKee got involved in producing the **Mr Benn** films for the BBC, he had never done anything like that before — he thought he could learn it as he went along. It was an exhausting but rewarding lesson. "It's a fantastically interesting medium to work in."

Writing too is becoming more and more enjoyable. "It's marvellous to work on six words and change the whole meaning just by changing one of them, or even the order." He's working on the script for a new film about Victor (a bear) and Maria, characters created by the Catalan illustrator Carme Sole Vendrell (published in book form by Blackie)



From 123456789 Benn.

and this involves translating from Catalan. His interest in this language and its culture has much to do with the impulse that led to **Tusk Tusk** — the fact that the Catalans have been oppressed for centuries by the central government of Spain and that their language and culture are threatened.

His feeling for Catalan is also related to his feelings about the current state of the world, a pride in your language and what you do being something which is not popular at the moment. "I suppose it's the education system that's failing to teach the basics of living, which is really an inner contentment to support the individual. We've got a life of so many years and we have to be free to do what we want. I don't think we're feeding that inner life, that inner contentment enough."

Then he smiled that wry smile again. "I'm being a bit heavy, today, aren't I?" So he put on a funny voice and talked about how he and his partners had put their houses "in hock" and borrowed money to set up King Rollo Films. "We've been cutting our throats every morning ever since." He smiled. "But it's all very exciting." ●



'King Rollo waved goodbye to Queen Gwen', from **King Rollo and the Bath**.

David McKee — the books

From Andersen Press

Tusk Tusk,
0 905478 27 4, £3.00

Two Admirals,
0 905478 06 1, £2.95

Not Now, Bernard,
0 905478 71 1, £2.95
(Also in paperback from Sparrow, 0 09 924050 5 £1.25)

The King Rollo books, all Andersen Press, all 95p each
King Rollo and the Birthday
0 905478 57 6

King Rollo and the Bread
0 905478 56 8

King Rollo and the New Shoes
0 905478 58 4

King Rollo and the Balloons
0 905478 69 X

King Rollo and the Dishes
0 905478 68 1

King Rollo and the Tree
0 905478 70 3

Coming autumn 1981:

King Rollo and the Bath
0 905478 97 5

King Rollo and King Frank
0 905478 96 7

King Rollo and the Search
0 905478 98 3

Published by Abelard

The Day the Tide Went Out and Out and Out,
0 200 72400 2, £2.95

The Magician and the Dragon,
0 200 72545 9, £3.25

The Magician and the Sorcerer,
0 200 72094 5, £3.25

The Magician and the Petnapping,
0 200 72451 7, £3.25

And coming from Abelard in August:

The Magician and Double Trouble,
0 200 72747 8, £4.95

In paperback from Piccolo

The Magician Who Lost his Magic,
0 330 23279 7, 75p

~~From Heinemann:~~

~~**Walk Rabbit Walk**,
0 434 94088 4, £2.90
Turning down lifts in hot air balloons, sports cars and the like Rabbit proves it's nicer, safer and even quicker to walk to Eagle's mountain top tea party.
(Story by Colin McNaughton and Elizabeth Attenborough)~~

The following are published by Dobson Books

Big Game Benn
0 234 77660 9, £3.95

Big Top Benn
0 234 77607 2, £3.95

Mr Benn Red Knight
0 234 77033 3, £3.95

123456789 Benn
0 234 77361 8, £3.95

Bronto's Wings
0 234 77770 2, £2.95

Available soon

Elmer — The Story of a Patchwork Elephant
0 234 77179 8

Elmer Again and Again
0 234 77085 6

Elmer and Wilbur
0 234 72256 8 (new)



Bernard, the Monster and Mother, from **Not Now, Bernard**.



David McKee with Leo Beltoft and Clive Juster.

PICTURE BOOK PEOPLE

Focus on six artists and their books

Six very different people, six different styles and methods of working but all, we think, worth getting to know better.

Feature compiled by Tony Bradman and Pat Triggs



Cucullin in *Fin McCoul The Giant of Knockmany Hill*

Tomie de Paola

Tomie de Paola describes himself as 'a workaholic': ten books last year. His total output is around 110 at the moment for 35-40 of which he has done text and illustration. While he's working on a book he puts in a 16 to 18-hour day, seven days a week.

But quantity doesn't rule out quality. Many of his books — like *The Clown of God*, *The Cat on the Dovrefell* and *The Christmas Pageant* — have won awards all over the world. In addition an American survey of children's reactions to books features several de Paola titles in the top 100 favourite books.

He was born in 1934 in Meriden, Connecticut, a small town in New England, the son of an Irish father and an Italian mother. 'I decided right from kindergarten that when I grew up I was going to write stories and draw pictures for books. I think that was because my mother read aloud to us a great deal. Books were a very important part of my childhood, and the stories she read were mostly folk tales and legends.' His Roman Catholicism was also important to him as a child, and he says 'there is a spiritual element to my work which I used to try and hide. I don't any more.'

Tomie left art school in 1956 after specialising in children's book illustration, but it wasn't until 1963 that he did his first book. After that he was, he says, 'a ten year overnight sensation. It wasn't until the early seventies that my books really began to get noticed.' *Nana Upstairs*, *Nana Downstairs* was his first book to 'really take off'. In this he describes the relationship he had as a four-year-old child with his 94-year-old, Irish grandmother. It's now in its ninth printing in the United States.

'Before that book, I had been learning while I was working. Now I'm really trying to make things come more from inside myself, and I think that my autobiographical books are my best. For me a story has to ring true, and I can only really write about what I have known or felt.'

He is a great believer in 'the genre of the picture book for children', and is worried by the trend towards turning the picture book into a 'coffee-table book for adults', something he feels is happening increasingly. 'I'm not saying that books like *Masquerade* shouldn't exist, it's just that I hate to see a book like that shove real picture books aside. After all, the picture book is all young children have got.'

Susanna Gretz

Susanna Gretz was born in New York 37 years ago, grew up in New Jersey, but produced the first in what she calls her 'bear Odyssey', *Teddybears 1 to 10*, in Frankfurt, West Germany. Now she's just finished her sixth book about the bears, as well as having just begun what she describes as a 'volunteer art programme' for older kids in the area.

Volunteer work brought her to Europe straight from school, as an American Red Cross worker in 1961. She spent many years in Frankfurt and, after resigning from the Red Cross, went to art school in Offenbach. There, she began to consider doing children's picture books, and on a trip to London to do the rounds of publishers, Ernest Benn offered her her first book.

He also feels that although in a picture book the pictures 'tell over half the story', the pictures should not dominate. He always writes the text first before drawing anything. 'I think for me there's a danger that if I started drawing first, the pictures would take over, and I've seen too many books from people these days who are using the children's picture book as a showcase for the artistic talent — or lack of talent as the case may be — and that's not what I want to do. I want to tell stories, particularly folk tales and legends, and I want to tell stories to children so they can understand them.'

Once the text is written, Tomie tapes it. 'I write my stories to be read aloud, and I often change the language to make sure that it reads well.' Then he proceeds to the artwork, and the 18-hour days begin.

Books available in Britain include

From Methuen:

The Clown of God,
0 416 87940 3, £3.95

A retelling of an ancient legend of a little juggler and a miracle. Rich, glowing pictures.

The Christmas Pageant,
0 416 88460 1, £2.95

(Fontana Picture Lion, 0 00 661878 2, in November, no price available yet)
The nativity presented by children. Appealing small size. Useful content for schools.

The Cat on the Dovrefell,
0 416 89770 3, £3.50

An old Norwegian folk tale of a man taking a white bear to the King, involved in a plan to outwit the trolls.

The Knight and the Dragon,
0 416 89630 8, £3.75

Two characters unfamiliar with their traditional roles; but willing to have a try, with delightfully unexpected results.

Oliver Button Is a Sissy,
0 416 89650 2, £2.50 (newly published)

Oliver gets horribly teased because he prefers tap dancing to baseball and playground fights. But all ends well.

Coming soon

The Comic Adventures of Old Mother Hubbard and Her Dog, 0 416 21350 2, about £3.95

and

The Prince of the Dolomites,
0 416 21430 4, about £3.95.

From The Andersen Press:

The Magic Pasta Pot,
0 09 138660 8, £2.95

A variation on the sorcerer's apprentice has the village overflowing with pasta.

Fin McCoul, The Giant of Knockmany Hill,
0 86264 00 8, £3.95 (newly published)

A version of the Irish tale in which Finn's wife saves him by outwitting the strongest giant in Ireland.

From Kestrel:

The Walking Coat,
0 7226 5723 4, £3.25, a story by Pauline Watson, illustrated by Tomie de Paola.



Oliver who prefers dancing to any kind of ball game steps into the spotlight in *Oliver Button is a Sissy*

The idea for doing a book with teddybears as the main characters grew from her early experiences with publishers. 'At the time I started, I got so many rejections from publishers who said my creatures weren't sweet enough, so I decided to do the bears almost out of revenge. I thought I would invent a really cuddly creature, but although they are cuddly, they're not that cuddly. I think they have a certain licence — they're not really like children, but they're not really like adults either, and that's why I think they're appealing.'

Susanna freely admits that she gets a lot of help from her publishers, and Alison Sage — her editor at Ernest Benn — in particular. 'I have thousands of ideas, but actually making a plot work is very difficult. It's a process of reducing a lot of ideas and situations to something which is

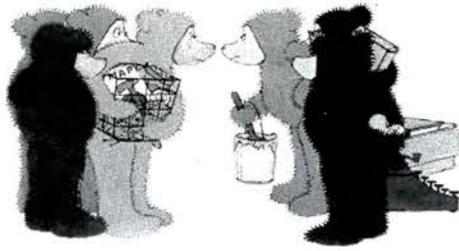


Susanna Gretz, courtesy of Ernest Benn

much simpler, and therefore more forceful.'

'I have to believe in what the story's expressing, and a lot of that has to do with the humour of the domestic situations. If that wasn't relevant to me any more I couldn't do it.'

Susanna's latest Bears saga — **Teddybears Moving Day** — has just been published, and she is currently working on a new idea for a Bears book which will find them in a supermarket. But she has plans to branch out into other things, while still keeping the 'bears Odyssey' going.



'You haven't helped at all,' said John.
'Why have you been crying?' said Charles.
Bears under stress in **Teddybears Moving Day**



John, the artistic one, builds a sandcastle in **The Bears who went to the Seaside**

Susanna Gretz's books are all published by Ernest Benn:

Teddybears ABC,
0 510 12418 6, £3.25
(Fontana Picture Lion,
0 00 661649 6, 85p)

Teddybears 1 to 10,
0 510 12411 9, £3.25 (Fontana
Picture Lion, 0 00 660647 4,
85p)

The Bears Who Stayed Indoors, 0 510 12416 X, £3.25

The Bears Who Went to the Seaside, 0 510 12417 8, £3.25
(Picture Puffin, 0 14 050.111 8,
90p)

Teddybears Moving Day,
0 510 12402 X, about £3.95

Teddybears Cookbook,
0 510 12410 0, £3.25

Celia Berridge

'We were very poor, and not romantically so, either. I owned scarcely half a dozen books until I was a teenager, but I went to the library nearly every day and searched in vain for books about families like mine. There just weren't any.'

Celia Berridge was born in 1943, the second eldest of seven children, all of whom she describes as 'voracious readers'. But it was the experience of poverty in her childhood in Middlesex and Cardiff, and also her experiences as an inner city teacher in London, which determined how her work as a picture book author/illustrator was to develop.

Her first book — and still her favourite — was **Runaway Danny**. 'It grew out of telling a long story in serial form to a remedial class one term while I was a teacher in London. **Nippers** had just come out, and they were the only books around which depicted urban living with any semblance of accuracy, so I wrote **Danny** to be read by a slow-reading nine or ten-year-old.'

Celia does have a specific audience in mind for her books. 'I try to make books which will be useful to a teacher because I know that the kids I write for don't buy books or use libraries much, so they're only going to see my books in school. As far as my graphic style is concerned, I believe that kids should be able to see how the pictures are done. I don't care for these glossy-technique picture books for young children, partly because I think they're intimidating, and also because I think they're wasted on young kids. I aim for clarity and relevance. I do believe that ordinary kids have a right to see their own world — both their inner and external worlds — accurately reflected in some books.'

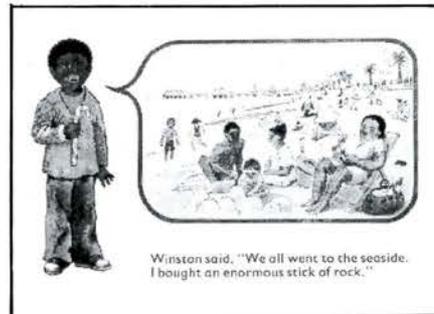
She has decided to give up teaching to devote more time to her work and her family — she's married and has two children, aged thirteen and nine. But she does feel increasingly torn between writing and illustrating. 'I feel a hankering to write something longer — modern fables, perhaps, the twentieth-century equivalent of folk tales. My next book — **Grandmother's Tales** — is a step in that direction.' She's also branching out into illustrating for television, with work for a new series by John Cunliffe called **Postman Pat**, to be screened this autumn on BBC TV.

'I see my job, I suppose, as being to try to produce books which, to the best of my ability, will have something in them for children. Books about children who go to boarding school or books with pictures full of antique furniture give me a rash. And I don't think it's my place to perform and show off my artistic skills at the expense of children's understanding.'

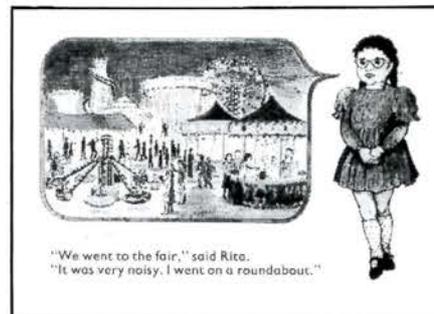


Celia Berridge,

Some realistic by play during news time from **What did you do in the Holiday?**



Winston said, "We all went to the seaside. I bought an enormous stick of rock."



"We went to the fair," said Rita.
"It was very noisy. I went on a roundabout."

Winston and Rita tell their stories, in **What Did You Do in the Holiday?**



Celia Berridge's available books are all published by André Deutsch:

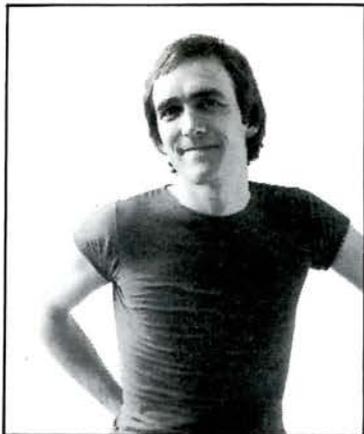
Runaway Danny,
0 233 96658 7, £3.95

On My Way to School,
0 233 96748 6, £2.95

Wet Day Witches,
0 233 96778 8, £3.50

What Did You Do in the Holidays?, 0 233 97117 3,
£3.25 (Hippo paperback,
0 590 70059 6, 95p)

Grandmother's Tales,
0 233 97357 5, about £4.25
(out in June).



Colin McNaughton

At 29, Colin McNaughton is a very busy man. To date he has published '22 or so' books, 'five or six of which are still in the publishers' pipeline'. He rents a corner of an architect's office in London near the British Museum, where he works six and a half days a week, and he spends as much of his spare time with his French wife and two children aged four and 18 months as he can.

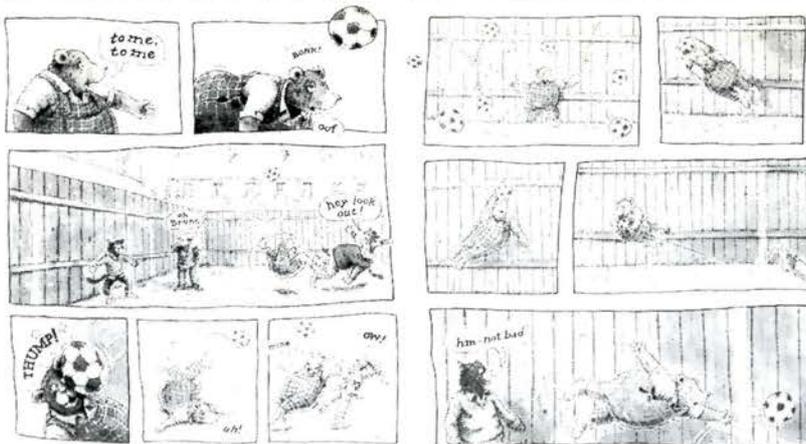
He was born in Newcastle and, despite many years of living in London, still has a noticeable Geordie accent. He came south straight from school to go to the Central School of Art and went on to the Royal College to specialise in illustration. Midway through his three years there his work was noticed. The result was two books for Ernest Benn and one for Heinemann before he left college, and he hasn't looked back.

Colin read very few books as a child. 'The Beano and Dandy annuals were about the height of my reading, but that wasn't through choice. Up there working-class kids weren't — and still aren't — bought books other than annuals at Christmas.'

When he starts a new picture book, he writes a 'scenario' first, then draws the story in pictures. 'Writing a picture book text I find very difficult, because after all, it is about the pictures. You don't want to say in the text what you can see in the pictures, that's saying things twice. You've got to get the right balance, the right feeling. I write it, my editors re-write it, and I'll re-write their re-writes until we feel it's right.'

He thinks that his graphic style is becoming 'looser, definitely. It's not that I spend less time on it, it's just that my confidence has increased and I can get on with it. What's more important — and this is something I've always known — is the actual content of the book. It doesn't matter how marvellous your technique is, if the content is empty or thin the work isn't going to be strong. And that's what I'm doing now — concentrating much more on the quality of the content.'

He feels that having children of his own has also helped to improve his work. 'I've learnt about the little things of childhood, like what a child wrapped up in a large bath towel looks like, and things I never knew or forgot about my own childhood. The details I'm seeing in my own children are helping to enrich my work, they're making it more solid, more full, less based on comic clichés and humorous situations.'



Bruno tries out for the team with his new friends in **Football Crazy**.

Ernest Benn and Heinemann are still Colin McNaughton's main publishers.

From Benn:

Colin McNaughton's ABC and 123, 0 385 13273 5, £2.75

The Rat Race, 0 510 22513 6, £3.25 (also available in Picture Puffin, 0 14 050.311 0, 80p)

The amazing adventures of Anton B. Stanton, a boy only as big as a teacup. Lively and inventive.

The Pirates, 0 510 00053 3, £3.50

Anton again, rescuing the King water rat's daughter from the marauding pirates.

Forthcoming are

Fat Pig, 0 510 00036 3, about £1.50

and later in the year
If Dinosaurs Were Cats and Dogs, 0 510 00116 5, £4.75

From Heinemann:

Walk Rabbit Walk, 0 434 94988 4, £2.90

The Great Zoo Escape, 0 434 94989 2, £2.90

Football Crazy,

0 434 94991 4, £4.95 (which should be issued as a Piccolo picture book in the spring of next year)

Newly arrived Bruno wins his place (and some friends) in Tex's Tigers five-a-side team. Bags of comic strip-type action — the pictures do everything but move, and they come pretty close to that.

King Nonn the Wiser,

0 434 94990 6, £4.50 (just out)

Book-loving, peaceful King Nonn manages to fulfil all his subjects' demands for traditional kingly behaviour by being willing and shortsighted. Good jokes in words and pictures.



Anton was very embarrassed when the king thanked him for all that he'd done.' Detail from **The Pirates**.

Mitsumasa Anno

Mitsumasa Anno was lucky enough to be born in a small town in western Japan called Tsuwano, in 1926, where his parents ran an inn. Lucky, as he sees it, because being born there at that time gave him a childhood in a beautiful, unspoiled valley surrounded by mountains, which he didn't leave for the first time until he was ten years old.

Now he is deeply pessimistic about the future of his country, which is the most heavily industrialised and most crowded nation on Earth. The beautiful countryside of his childhood now lies under acres of barren concrete, as 'modern civilisation' spreads out like a polluting disease. Anno thinks it also pollutes minds, and particularly young minds, and points to the fact that suicide in the under-18 age group is reaching nightmare proportions, with an estimated 900 to 1000 children taking their own lives a year. This he relates not only to the pressures of an education system which is probably one of the most competitive in the world, but also to the lack of creativity in the teaching.

'If teachers are not creative, then they can't bring out creativity in their pupils. A person who knows the names of many flowers may know nothing of the flowers themselves.' And coming from a country where there is almost no real countryside left, he says that 'human beings can't do without nature. No human being can really live without earth and grass and sky.'

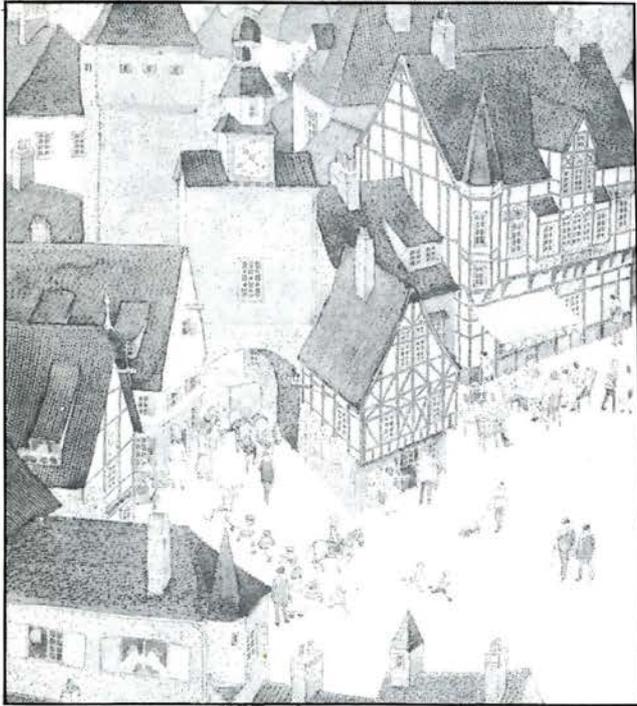


Mitsumasa Anno

Anno was himself a primary school teacher for ten years before going on to teach art at college level. A publisher saw his work while he was teaching, and so he began a career as an author/illustrator of children's books in 'middle age'. Today he is Japan's top picture book artist, and his books have appeal for all age ranges. A visit to Europe 20 years ago, inspired by the stories of Hans Christian Andersen, has led him to

translate his own childhood from Japanese to European countryside, as in *Anno's Counting Book* and *Anno's Italy*. His work covers a very wide range, from his intricate, Escher-like *Alphabet* to the straightforward picture book like *The King's Flower*.

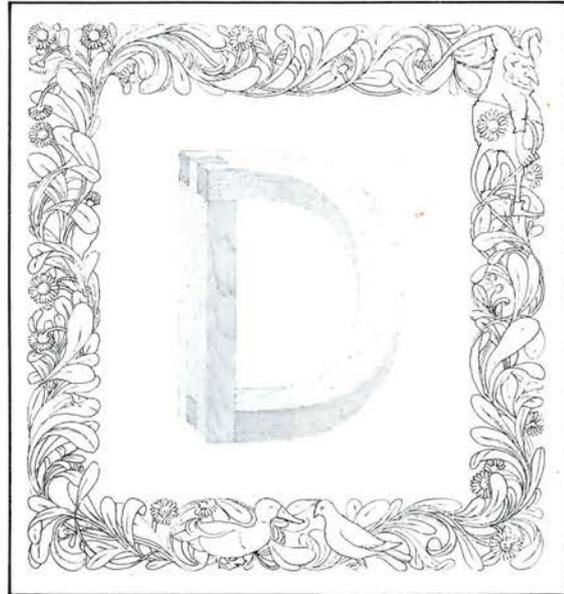
To a certain extent his pessimism for the future has deepened after seeing the spread of the industrial blight in the landscape of Europe over the last few years. He feels there is nothing he can do to give back to children the beauty that has been lost; 'Except in my books.'



A stage in *Anno's Journey* through a timeless Europe. Each wordless page is packed with stories, jokes and references.

Nine of Anno's books are currently available, all from The Bodley Head, including *Anno's Counting Book*, 0 370 30009 2, £3.50, and *The King's Flower*, 0 370 30182 X, £3.95. His latest book is *Anno's Magical ABC*, 0 370 30405 5, £5.95, which he has done with his son, Masaichiro. It's an anamorphic alphabet, in which the pictures are distorted on the page, and can only be seen properly by using the silver-paper mirror provided with the book.

Look, and look again at the letters in *Anno's Alphabet*. A book full of surprises for the sharp-eyed and sharp-witted.



Peter Spier

Peter Spier and his wife and two children now live in Long Island, near New York, but he was born in 1927 in Holland. His father was an illustrator and journalist, and Peter says: 'I can't remember a time when I didn't dabble with clay, draw, or watch someone draw. My father worked at home, and I grew up with it all.'

When he was 18, Peter went to art school in Amsterdam. In 1951, the Spier family decided to move to the United States, and settled in Houston. From there Peter moved on to New York where he began to work as an illustrator, and eventually began doing his own books.

He is a meticulous craftsman who goes out to make hundreds of sketches of countryside, people or buildings before he tackles a book. He also says that all his books have very specific settings, and that the greatest compliment for him is when someone says 'I come from the area you used in one of your books and I know exactly where you stood for that drawing.' He doesn't like to disillusion them. 'They don't, of course. The pictures are always composites of various things.'

He's fairly hard-headed about what he does. 'I like doing picture books, and that's why I do them. They have a much longer selling life than an average novel — I hope my books will still be selling in 20 or 30 years' time. But I only promote an idea if I think it will sell, and I try to do a little market research beforehand on the current popular themes.'

This is evident from the fact that many of his books are now designed as co-editions. His latest book *People* was published in 39 languages, and was almost a runaway best-seller before it reached the shops.

He likes to be involved in every aspect of his books, right down to the production. He chooses the typeface himself, and pastes up the books to his own design. And although he works at producing what he thinks the 'market' wants, he's also clear about who he's really doing it for.

'In the end, if a child doesn't like it, it's dead, although adults are responsible for publishing and buying it. So justice is done.'

Many of Peter Spier's books have won awards like the Caldecott Medal. Fifteen are available in this country from World's Work. The latest are

Bored — Nothing to Do,
0 437 76513 X, £3.10
The Great Flood,
0 437 76512 1, £3.50
Nothing Like a Fresh Coat of Paint,
0 437 76515 6, £3.95
People, 0 437 76516 4, £4.95.

Puffin publish a story by Phyllis Krasilovsky, **The Cow Who Fell in the Canal**, 0 14 050 034 0, 80p, illustrated by Peter Spier, and have just issued **The Fox Went Out On a Chilly Night**, an old song illustrated by Peter Spier, 0 14 050.304 8, 90p. ●



'All done. Now let's clean up.'

Three satisfied children who have painted *everything* in *Nothing like a Fresh Coat of Paint*



Peter Spier

Fox went out on a chilly night.



The creator of the most amazing children's book of the 1970's has now produced the most amazing children's book of the 1980's.

The Most Amazing Hide-and-Seek Counting Book

Robert Crowther

After the phenomenal success of *The Most Amazing Hide-and-Seek Alphabet Book* – which sold 100,000 copies in its first year – Robert Crowther has turned his design talents to a counting book. The youngest reader will soon find out how many snails are hiding behind the stones, how many butterflies are lurking in the lettuces and how many turtles are hatching out of their eggs, and will enjoy a really exciting and dazzling way of learning to count.

£4.50

Kestrel Books

Get Smart BE A WHIZZ KID

Whizz Kids are activity and hobby paperbacks which show you how to beat the experts at their own game. They're jam-packed with practical advice, illustrated in colour and they're fun!

Titles available:- Bikes, How to be a Detective, Fishing, Ponies and Riding, Kites, Birdwatching, Collecting Stamps, Be a Magician, Chess, How to be a Cook, Kittens and Cats, Puppies and Dogs, Taking Photos, Treasure Hunting, How to be an Astronomer, Painting and Drawing, Disguises and Make-up, Model Railways.

See the range at your local bookshop, W. H. Smiths, John Menzies and Boots Book Departments.



Published by Macdonald, Holywell House, Worship Street, London EC2A 2EN

£1000 SPACE INVADERS COMPETITION



Join in the Great Space Invaders Competition.
Two Atari Video Computer systems

to be won plus a Pye colour television set and 100 runner-up prizes.
Get a competition entry form from your local bookshop.

The competition applies to UK only and closes 31st August 1981.

A POET IN SCHOOL

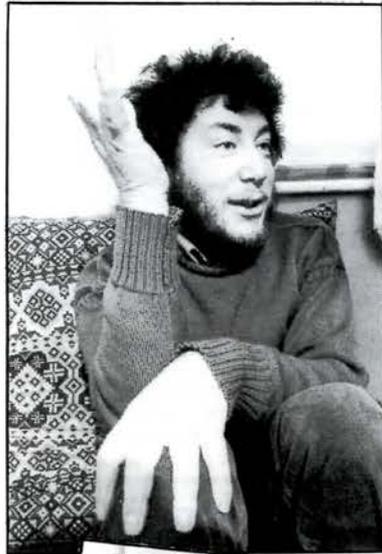
Mike Rosen spends a lot of time in schools. We talked to him about working with teachers and children and about the part poetry played in his growing up.

On his passport Mike Rosen describes himself as 'writer, teacher, broadcaster'. He's done his probationary year all right, but you sense his claim to membership of the profession arises more from his feelings about children and working with them than from being officially 'qualified'. Teaching takes up a lot of his time. Apart from one-off visits to schools, festivals and book fairs, for the last three years he has spent one day a week in a Holloway comprehensive and now also goes for one afternoon a week to a primary school, also in London. He works with classes and groups often with the same children over a long period. The idea is to get them writing. 'Things only really begin to happen with kids when they know you. Writing may be slow in coming. What you get by waiting is what is most use to them and to the school.' He shares his own work (prose and poetry) with children, but as a fellow craftsman; there's no sense of 'copy me'.

Neither does he expect his writing to appeal to everyone. For a year he was writer in residence at Vauxhall Manor School (all girls, many with a Caribbean background). 'I thought, why should I force my poems first of all on girls, and then on girls with a very different culture to my own: different home background, different ways of conceiving of a family — just as secure, just as strong, but with a different scheme of things? Why should the idea of two brothers rolling around in a bedroom be appealing?' So he spent a lot of time listening; listening to the girls talking about their families and friends and getting them to see 'that they could write about *their* experiences, just as I write about mine'.

His recall of the experience and feelings of his childhood is sharp and clear. It's all captured in his poems and on call whether he is meeting a group of unknown ten-year-olds, or observing his four-year-old son, Joe. There's one way, though, in which Mike Rosen's childhood was different from that of many of the children he meets. Poetry was 'just around' at home. His parents (Connie and Harold Rosen) had lots of tapes and records of poets reading their own work. He didn't understand them, but he 'grew attached' to them. He felt the same way about the poems he met in junior school. His teacher Mrs McNabb was keen on choral speaking. Her class did performances and went in for competitions. She rang him up not long ago to ask him to visit her school. 'You won't remember me.' In reply he quoted the first verse of Edward Thomas's *Adlestrop* — one of her favourites.

Yes. I remember *Adlestrop* —
The name, because one afternoon
of heat the express train drew up
there
Unwontedly. It was late June.



'None of us knew what "unwontedly" meant — we just liked saying it. I think I still approve of that. Not so much the performing and the competing, but the getting to know. If you go over and over a poem, or any piece of writing that is of itself enjoyable, then you get a sort of long-term attachment to it. It's the same as teddy bears, or pop music; it becomes a part of your identity. Poems should be like familiar things. In school everyone's favourites should be in a book at the back of the class, so that when they are called for they're available.

In the same junior school Mike Rosen was compiling his first anthology: 'all the rude and naughty little rhymes from the playground. I wrote these down so I would have a better repertoire than anyone else.' This irreverent streak continued into secondary school where he discovered parody. 'We'd "do" poems in English, and not finding them particularly useful I'd take them and write parodies about kids in the class.' After the class had "done" a poem teachers were fond of saying 'Now you write me.' 'I remember me and my mum having a real good time writing a Robin Hood ballad together, with just absurd McGonagall-type last lines; falling about writing good-bad poetry. I was convinced I'd written appalling poetry, but it was fun. I remember the teacher reading it through and just writing A at the bottom and handing it back to me. It's strange when you think about it — there's mum and kid really enjoying themselves, having a good laugh and the teacher just writing A and handing it back. It's the epitome of what not to do with a poem.'

Now he spends two or three hours a week typing out what the kids at Holloway write so everyone can share it and so they can take it home. 'So when his mum and dad say, "How're you getting on at school, son?", he doesn't have to say "I got C"; he can say, "I wrote this."'

He's thinking like a teacher as well as a poet when he approaches his one-off visits to schools. But there's an added ingredient: Mike Rosen, actor. At Oxford, apart from reading English, he wrote and performed in a lot of revue sketches. He thought that might be what he would end up doing. In a way he was right. When *Mind Your Own Business*, his first book of poems for kids, was so successful Pam Royds, at Deutsch, suggested he might go and read them in schools. Something clicked. 'For four or five years I'd been doing revue — take-offs, loony walks, silly faces. It had never occurred to me that I could go places and treat my poems like revue scripts for kids. There were these two roads, but I hadn't seen there was only a tiny gap between them to be bridged.' Poet, teacher and performer came together: the Mike Rosen show was on the road. On a cold windy Wednesday in February, we went with it.



Mike Rosen visits Gayhurst Junior School, Hackney



Preparation begins at home.

A lot of thought goes into ensuring that schools make the most of a one-off visit. Mike sends three pages of ideas and suggestions well in advance.

Beforehand: Read some, any or all(!) of my poems with the children . . . letting them talk freely about the ones they like or dislike and encouraging them to explore similarities between the 'events' in the poems and 'events' in their own lives. Encourage them to play with some of the word-game poems.

My Visit: I will be informal. I ad lib. I like to talk about things that have happened to me in the previous two or three days. I may read them poems that aren't in any of the books. If I have groups under 30 in size, I like to hear what some of the children have to say — one at a time. Because it is a 'performance' (though I disguise it as a kind of conversation) I find it helps me if teachers sit at the back rather than beside me at the front.



One o'clock. Mike says goodbye to Joe, Susanna and Eddie (who is asleep). Today the school is only a few minutes' drive away. Some visits mean a very early start and a lot of travelling.



'D'you know my name? . . . Can you spell it? . . . D'you know what they used to call me at school? . . . Rosiebum — don't tell anyone. I'm going to tell you about something that's been worrying me all this week . . .'

It's the story of the orange juice that keeps disappearing from the Rosens' doorstep, with mimicing of sleepy Rosens and stealthy juice snatchers, and lots of audience participation.



The school. The gates are padlocked. How to get in? A chilly detour reveals the entrance, hidden at the back. Far above in the dark red building a window opens and a cheery voice shouts down. 'There you are, thought you'd got lost!' It's the headmaster.

Up three flights of stone stairs to the hall. Jabberwocky on the walls. There are two 'performances' scheduled, third and fourth years, fifty children in all. Chairs are set out in the library; but Mike goes straight into the classroom, still in his coat, to meet the first lot.

He runs his fingers over his mouth. 'Brub brub . . . I've got to warm up my lips to talk to you.' Laughter. 'I'll see you in the library.'



'Who's doing it? . . . What would you do? . . . Shall I tell you what we did? . . . That's this week's news. Just thought I'd tell you about it.'



10



'But it doesn't end there. Now I say to my little boy, Joe.

"What do you think you're doing?" "Mm?"
 "Why did you do that?" "Mm?"
 "Don't do it, you understand? Or there'll be trouble."
 "Trouble."
 "And I mean it."

14
↓

'Nightmares . . . do you have nightmares? I used to have one about the underground in London. I'm in the underground, down between the lines. And the platform's getting higher and coming to squeeze me. And I can see a train coming, nearer and nearer. And I'm shouting, "I'm here. Down between the lines. Can't somebody see me?" . . .'



11
↓



'Who knows what the longest journey in the world is?' 'From the light switch to the bed,' everyone shouts. He performs that one, and some others about sharing a bedroom with his brother.

'I don't suppose any of you ever do this?' showing Quentin Blake's illustration of a clothes fight. As he reads he acts out the poems. He's father, brother, himself, playing the audience with perfect timing, milking the jokes for all they are worth. 'Father says, Never let me see you doing that again' — and everyone joins in.

12

'Poetic forms, forms of language, shapes and rhythms are themselves a kind of experience. A form can trigger off ideas, ways of shaping experience, arouse memories.

Dangers: writing to show off, empty nothings, weak imitations, writing to fit expectations.

Advantages: it *can* be the crack in the dam that unlocks the flood.'

If you would like to try to book Mike Rosen, write to him at 11 Meeson Street, London E5 0EA. You need to approach him at least three months in advance.



16
↓



'But it doesn't end there . . .' Woken by noises from the baby alarm Mike and Susanna creep along to Joe's room. 'He's got all his toys lined up — and he's wagging his finger at them. "Trouble. And I mean it." Nothing changes much does it?'

Time for questions.

'Can you do Everybody?' He can. So can they. So can their teacher. 'It took me three weeks,' says Mike. 'It took me three months,' says the teacher. 'Try Calamity — Calamity, alamity, lamity, amity, mity, ity, ty, y,' says Mike — very fast.

'Will there be another adventure of the Bakerloo Flea?' 'No, but there might be further adventures of the Bakerloo Flea women — about a plague of wasps, blowing out of hand dryers, coming out of light switches. You'll have to write some Bakerloo Flea stories yourselves. What about Son of the Bakerloo Flea? The Bakerloo Flea meets Godzilla? You could do a running commentary.'

Then it's time for the second group. And then talking to teachers about using the visit as a starting point for talk, drama, writing, displays, cartoon strips, tape recordings. About grouping the poems: home life, Me, play life, fantasies, nonsense and word games, sayings.

'Help them to find an overlap between the idea in the poem and any idea, memory or attitude of their own.'

CATCHFIRE

Graham Dunstan Martin

From the publishers of *The Hobbit* comes a new tale of imagined countries — a powerful fable of good and evil.

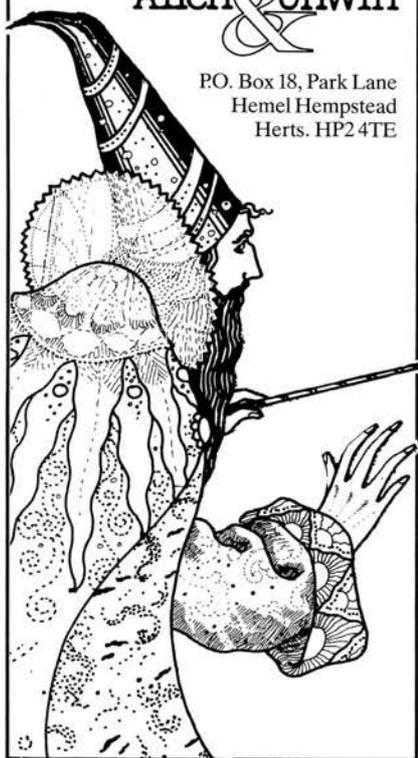
The Realm of Feydom is dying: an ancient spell forbids the life-giving rain to fall; war, famine and plague (together with a monster still more sinister) threaten the land. The young king Ewan and the witch-girl Catchfire set out to break the spell and save Feydom.

This tale of sorcery, suspense, dragons and human treachery is an exciting sequel to *Giftwish*.

£4.95

George Allen & Unwin

P.O. Box 18, Park Lane
Hemel Hempstead
Herts. HP2 4TE



The Children's Book Award

This is a new award for a work of fiction published in 1980 for children under 14 years of age. It is interesting because it is the first award in this country in which children play a major part in the selection process.

The award is given by the Federation of Children's Book Groups, a parent-based organisation made up of groups of people in cities, towns and villages who work to bring books and children together.

Pat Thomson, the current chairman of the Federation explains.

Groups of adults and children working together all over the country took part in the selection process, supervised by a Federation team who know children as well as books. We naturally insisted on a high literary and physical standard but we used the Federation's unique opportunities to see how children respond to books under all kinds of circumstances — and we gave them the last word!

We initiated this award because — We care about standards in children's books — We think books are important and we want to remind our communities of that — We wanted to express our thanks to those people who give our children so much pleasure.

And most of all — We wanted children to be involved in the selection of a children's book.

And what did they choose?

Mister Magnolia by Quentin Blake, Cape, 0 224 01612 1, £3.50.

'Mister Magnolia walked straight off the page and into the imagination of the children who read it. They immediately participated, speculating about his friends and family and that single boot. Most of them had it by heart, the younger ones demanding re-readings, and the older ones enjoying the details in the pictures and the friendly inventiveness of the action. A live book for live children which improved on each reading.'

The award, presented to Quentin Blake on 4th April at the Federation annual conference in Cambridge, took the form of a special book filled with the children's comments, letters and pictures.

Nine other books were nominated as runners-up (see list). A further fifty-three books appear as the Pick of the Year in the Federation's annual publication *About Books for Children*, available from Martin Kromer, 22 Beacon Brow, Bradford, West Yorkshire BD6 3DE (75p plus postage).

Quentin Blake has designed a special poster with the 'top ten' books on it. Free copies are available from the SBA (enclose sae with 15½p stamp) while supplies last.

Why not do a Mister Magnolia event? Available from the Federation

are stickers (1p each) and balloons (4p each), all with Mister Magnolia designs by Quentin Blake. Apply to Jan Ryan, 40 Douglas Towers, Radwell Drive, Bradford (add 30% to order for postage and packing).

The Federation also has exhibitions for hire.

Fifty Modern Picture Books
Fifty Recommended Poetry Books
Sex Education Books for Young Children.

For details, contact Cathy Lister, 4 Pinewoods, Church Aston, Newport Shropshire.

If you would like to find out how to join or start a group, contact Martin Kromer (address above).

TILLY'S RESCUE, Faith Jaques, Heinemann, 0 434 94441 6, £3.95
A satisfying story of friends. The little wooden doll sets out to rescue her friend, Edward bear. For the under-sevens.

THE GHOST AND BERTIE BOGGIN, Catherine Sefton, Faber, 0 571 11524 1, £3.25

A proper story book for the under-eights. Funny, just a little big ghosty, and very sympathetic to this age group.

DAGGIE DOGFOOT, Dick King-Smith, Gollancz, 0 575 02767 3, £4.50

An extrovert tale of a pig with ambition. Fun in the action, language and plot. For up to 11 or 12.

A STRONG AND WILLING GIRL, Dorothy Edwards, Methuen, 0 416 88630 2, £4.25

Recent history made accessible and enjoyable through the craft of this storyteller. For over-tens.

THE MAGICIANS OF CAPRONA, Diana Wynne Jones, Macmillan, 0 333 27891 7, £4.95 (out of print at present but under consideration for a reprint)

Stylish story for good readers over nine. Two rival families of magicians clash in the streets of Caprona, unaware that a far darker force threatens them. Funny and alarming at the same time.

A DARK HORN BLOWING, Dahlov Ipcar, Macdonald, 0 354 08101 2, £4.25

A unique book, full of memorable images, based firmly in folklore and fulfilling the need for a sustained folk tale. Haunting tale for over-elevens.

CORA RAVENWING, Gina Wilson, Faber, 0 571 11471 7, £5.25
Most popular girls' book for elevens and over. A school story with sinister overtones. Exciting but thought-provoking too, and very well written.

THE HORN OF MORTAL DANGER, Lawrence Leonard, Julia MacRae, 0 86203 010 2, £4.95

A very successful combination of fantasy and the most authentic railway and canal detail. Most of the young 'testers' demanded their own copy! An exciting and complete story for ten-to-fourteens.

JOHN DIAMOND, Leon Garfield, Kestrel, 0 7226 5619 X, £4.50
Dazzling, fast-moving story, elegantly put together. Gives pleasure through its characters, the plot and the language. For ten-to-fourteens, and probably older. ●



BOOKS FOR KEEPS

NEWS

Charts

The Puffin Reading Chart is now in its second edition — updated and enlarged by Aidan Warlow. Books are grouped in twelve stages — up to independent reading at 12-plus. Copies 35p each from the Children's Marketing Dept., Penguin Books, 536 King's Road, London SW10 0UH.

and Badges



Some super badges are available from Hertfordshire Library Service. Orders up to 1,000 — 11p each + carriage and VAT; orders of 1,000 and over — 8p each + carriage and VAT. Old designs (not shown) at £70 per 1,000 or 10p each. Contact Alan White, Library Service, County Headquarters, Hertford SG13 8EJ (Tel: Hertford 54242, Ext. 5487).

Awards and Prizes

The Guardian Award for fiction has gone this year to **The Sentinels** by Peter Carter, OUP, 0 19 271438 4, £4.75.

The Mother Goose Award for a new picture book artist has been awarded to Juan Wijngaard for **Green Finger House** (story by Rosemary Harris), Eel Pie, 0 906 00806 9, £2.95. The runners-up were A. Vesey for **Cousin Blodwyn's Visit**, Methuen (a Picture-Story Book), 0 416 89580 8, £2.95, and Eric Hill for **Where's Spot?**, Heinemann, 0 434 94288 X, £2.95.

The Graphic prize at the Bologna Children's Book Fair was awarded to Moonlight Publishing for its **Yok-Yok** series, illustrated by Etienne Delessert (see page 29).

The Critica in Erba prize at Bologna went to World's Work for Jenny Partridge's **Mr Squint** — one of a set of four small books published last September (0 437 66170 9, £1.50).

No books for our children . . .

Over one fifth of the books borrowed from public libraries are children's books. Children's access to new books is being blocked not only by cuts within the public library service but also by severe cutbacks in school library services. Of the 68 local authorities which operate a school library service (and many do not have one at all) only 11 permitted allowances for books to keep pace with inflation. One managed to increase provision in real terms by 82.3%. It is astonishing that, at the other end of the scale, cuts have been made amounting to over 30% or even over 40%. 14 authorities reduced expenditure in cash, and the overall drop in spending was 8%. Children in some parts of the country are luckier than others. In Powys, the School Library Service spends £4 per child. In Sefton, the expenditure amounts to 8p per child, less than the price of a daily newspaper.

Is this any way to plan for the future? The Secretary of State for Education, Mr Mark Carlisle, in a recent statement in **The Library Association Record** lamented the fact that so few children have books at home. They are now also being prevented from obtaining them in schools and libraries. Sales of children's books fell in the first quarter of last year by 20%. If libraries do not buy books they will cease to be published.

What can you do? Get a copy of the National Book Committee Report on Public Library Spending from the National Book League and find out how your authority compares. Then if it's bad news — start lobbying. Silence equals consent — so make sure your voice is heard.



Mr Squint

Book Events Ahead

1st–5th June:
Cambridge Children's Poetry Week
Details 0223-60770

10th–19th July:
Ikley Literature Festival
Details 0274-23051

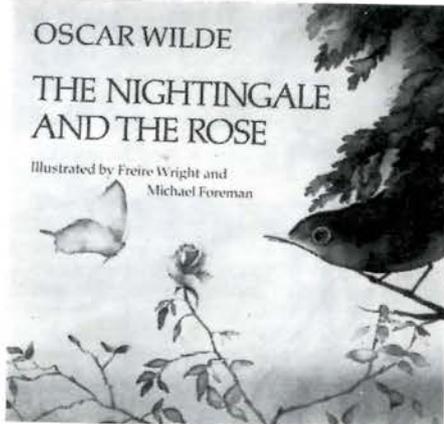
22nd–25th July:
Canterbury Children's Book Fair
Details 0227-68631

22nd July–8th August:
Children's Books of the Year at the NBL.
Chosen by Barbara Sherrard-Smith. Details Barbara Buckley, 01-870 9055

3rd–10th October:
Children's Book Week
Start planning now. Stickers, balloons, posters available.
Contact Michelle Oberman, 01-580 6321. ●

GRIMM'S
Hansel and Gretel

Illustrated by Antonella Bolliger-Savelli

P
I
C
T
U
R
EOSCAR WILDE
**THE NIGHTINGALE
AND THE ROSE**Illustrated by Freire Wright and
Michael ForemanB
O
O
K
S

KAYE and WARD

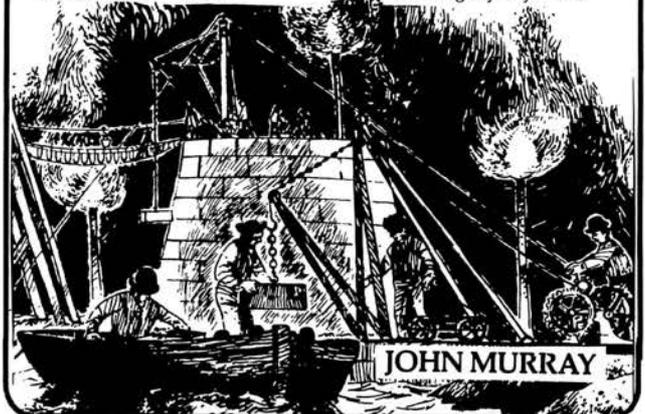
**THE
LIGHTHOUSE
BOY** A novel for younger readers
CRAIG MAIR

This story is woven around the building of the Bell Rock lighthouse. When his father was press-ganged Jamie Scott had to earn money to support the family, so when he was discovered as a stowaway on board the lighthouse supply boat *The Smeaton* the eminent engineer, Robert Stevenson, responsible for the building of the lighthouse, allowed him to do a man's job.

Craig Mair had exclusive access to Stevenson family papers and journals for his book on the Stevenson family of engineers, *A Star for Seamen*, and this story of the building of the lighthouse and Jamie's part in it is a vivid one full of fascinating detail: there really was a boy called Jamie who worked with the men on Bell Rock and lived in the barrack house. The engineer was the grandfather of Robert Louis Stevenson.

0 7195 3824 6 £4.95

Drawings by Ray Evans



JOHN MURRAY

ALL COLOUR PICTURE BOOKS FROM GRANADA



SIDNEY'S HOUSE

is a very small one but the Builders want to knock it down for a big building. Sadly Sidney sees it go but there is a happy surprise for him.

A lovely story by
Peter Venture
for £3.95

Written by
Michael Chinery
and illustrated with superb
(and accurate) paintings by
Michael Atkinson

A CHILD'S BOOK OF BUTTERFLIES AND FLOWERS

And

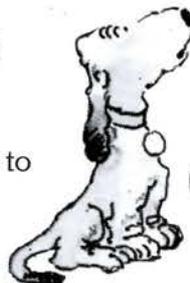
A CHILD'S BOOK OF BIRDS AND FLOWERS

A wonderful introduction to
wild life for all young
children—
£2.95 each hardback

The Second Book of the
Adventures of a Mixed-up
Mongrel told by
Jilly Cooper
and illustrated by
Faith Jaques

LITTLE MABEL'S GREAT ESCAPE

Mabel and her Dad tunnel
under the wire of Colditz
Kennels. £3.95



The Second Book of
Promise's Adventures told
and illustrated by
Babette Cole

PROMISE AND THE MONSTER

Promise, the tubby but very
clever pony, sets out to
rescue the poor monster who
has been monster-napped!
£3.95



GRANADA CHILDREN'S BOOKS

SOUND AND VISION

Peter Purves Puppy Walker

During his time as a presenter of *Blue Peter* Peter Purves puppy-walked two guide dogs for the Guide Dogs for the Blind Association. Now he has cooperated with photographer Fay Godwin to produce *Tess, the Story of a Guide Dog*. Gollancz, 0 575 02959 5, £4.95. It's a detailed and fascinating account of the life of a guide dog from the moment she is born to the day when she is left totally responsible for the safety of her owner. The full-colour photographs are an excellent complement to the text. Part of the proceeds from the book will go to the Association.



'Only a metal spoon will make funny faces at you, from *Yok Yok: The Rabbit and Three Other Stories*.

Photo by Fay Godwin from *Tess, the Story of a Guide Dog*.

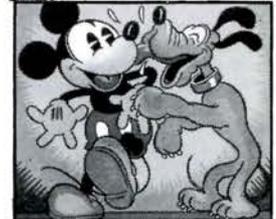
TV Star/Bologna Prize Winner

Yok-Yok created by Etienne Delessert has made his British TV debut in *Ad Lib*, Yorkshire TV's programme for young children. The short animated films were made in Switzerland by Delessert and

his team of graphic artists. Children who saw them on Swiss TV demanded storybooks — and more films. There are now six small square books each containing four episodes of *Yok-Yok's* adventures. Each short six-picture adventure is followed by a short piece of text which enlarges on the experience and serves as a starting point for a conversation between adult and child. The glowing pictures of these beautiful little books, their potential which far exceeds their cosy appealing size and their price (99p each) should recommend them to parents and teachers. *Yok-Yok* with his amazing huge red hat should make many friends among children.

Nostalgia and Fun!

Piccolo have a full-colour paperback of the Mickey Mouse reprint produced in America for the Mickey Mouse birthday celebrations. It's still a good read and lovely to look at. *The Adventures of Mickey Mouse*, Walt Disney, Piccolo, 0 330 26386 2, £1.25. ●



Independent Television for Schools and Colleges
The English Programme 13-18 years
 Autumn term 1981

Poetry

A new unit, *I See a Voice*, aims to show pupils that they don't hate poetry by looking at: different uses of poems; love poems; poems as weapons; imagery; well-known poets.

Featuring Adrian Mitchell, Frankie Armstrong, John Cooper Clark, Paul Weller, Miroslav Holub and others.

Pupils' book by Michael Rosen.

Other units for school year 1981/82 will be: *TV Drama - Power*; *Macbeth*; *Viewpoint 2*; *Writing*; *One World*.

For further details contact The Education Officer, The English Programme, Thames Television, 149 Tottenham Court Road, London W1P 9LL, or your local ITV company.

Starting Monday 21 September 10.21 - 10.46

John Cooper Clark, 'the punk poet', in *I See a Voice*



'What a powerful, disturbing and distinguished collection they make'

— from Margaret Drabble's Preface to the book

The Music of What Happens

A selection of outstanding poems published in *The Listener* between 1965 and 1980, edited and introduced by its Literary Editor, Derwent May. It represents both established poets and new writers now in their twenties and thirties, and includes famous poems by W. H. Auden, Philip Larkin, Stevie Smith, Henry Reed and Ted Hughes.

£5.50 HARDBACK £3.95 PAPERBACK

From booksellers

BBC
PUBLICATIONS

When a writer has a centenary accompanied by radio and television coverage, newspaper articles, an exhibition, reprints, and talk of a biography, the time seems ripe to look back at her contribution.

Anne Harvey considers

ELEANOR FARJEON

Every year the Children's Book Circle makes the Eleanor Farjeon Award. It goes to someone who has made a distinguished contribution to children's literature as she herself did, though perhaps the word 'distinguished' is too polite and dressed up for the warmest, liveliest and most expansive of our storytellers.

Her concern, as a writer, was for the children. 'Never write down to children,' she advised would-be writers. 'Be yourself. Into your work will then go what nobody else could have put into it.' And into her own work went her experiences, her marvellous originality, her joy in living, a wit and spontaneity I find unequalled.



The old nurse from *The Old Nurse's Stocking Basket* — drawing by Edward Ardizzone.

Any one department of her work would ensure her a place with the best of her craft. The stories in the recently re-issued *The Little Bookroom* and *The Old Nurse's Stocking Basket* give more delight on each reading. Her plays, whether in collaboration with her brother Herbert as in *The Glass Slipper* or alone as in *The Silver Curlew*, are theatrically effective and highly professional, their bubbling fun, charm and insight sadly lacking from today's pantomimes. The essays that introduce collections of her stories, or the poetry of Robert Frost and Edward Thomas are immediately alive; you want to read on because she has inspired you. It is fashionable to deride, often misguidedly, what has been labelled romantic, or gently whimsical, forgetting that such writing, at its best, strikes home unexpectedly, often with subtle delicacy. This was borne out when I recently introduced Eleanor Farjeon's poetry to a group of eleven-year-old girls preparing for a spoken poetry competition.

One picked 'Cotton':
 'My wedding gown's cotton,
 My wedding gown's cheap,
 It's crisper than sea-foam . . .'
 another 'Sometime':
 'What is he like?
 Perhaps a coalman,
 Perhaps a King.
 Will he come on a horse
 Or a motor-bike? . . .'

Both these are from *Cherrystones*, where the poems are related to the counting rhymes . . . Tinker, tailor . . . This year, next year . . . Silk, satin . . . In *The Mulberry Bush*, its companion volume, party games are explored.

'Blind Man's Buff':
 'Banter him! befoozle him!
 Bewilder him! bamboozle him!
 Batter, bait and badger him, and then do a bunk! . . .'

and 'Seeking', with its lonely ending:
 'For when she finds them in the game,
 They may not be the same . . .'

both caught the ear and the imagination.

The nursery poems still have relevance: the quarrels, the meal-times, going to bed . . . Everyone's experience includes the dread of Mother going downstairs, of being left alone, of the shadows . . .

'Whatever can I do to bring her back? . . .
 Mother! I want a drink of water, please . . .'

Eleanor Farjeon's own mother, Maggie, pretty daughter of American actor, Joseph Jefferson, sang to her children. Music, dancing, acting, reading and theatre visits filled the lives of Eleanor and her brothers, Harry, Joe and Bertie. Formal education did not. The governess was told 'To teach them nothing they did not wish to learn'. Ben Farjeon, himself a writer, made sure they had access to his 8,000 volume library, and each Sunday gave them new books. At eight Eleanor, already acquainted with Longfellow, decided she liked Tennyson even better.

An avid reader, she is immortalised in the short-sighted bookworm of Ardizzone's illustrations for *The Little Bookroom*.

'Let me be, please let me be,
 I want to read by the fire.'

Steeped in myths, legends and folklore, unrestricted and encouraged, her

own writing was precocious. Stories in exercise books at five and six, and on her seventh birthday her first real poem, a Valentine to Button, her sweetheart!

'My heart has never beat before
 As it did beat just now . . .'

From then, the poetry flowed, reaching its peak with an eleven-year-old attempt at blank verse, 'Chaos':

' . . . in the midst of all,
 His work beginning, Chaos, mighty God,
 Repels the darkness, and above his head,
 Appears the zodiac, in shining stars . . .'

Growing up for her was painful; she clung to adolescence. Words flowed, but too many, too glibly. But if not yet at ease with her own muse, her late twenties revealed her a valued critic. Her friends included Rupert Brooke, the Meynells, Arnold and Clifford Bax, D.H. Lawrence and in 1913, Edward Thomas. Her love for Thomas brought her maturity and development of her own skills. Her *Nursery Rhymes of London Town* (1917) are an inventive handling of London place names, with the sort of play on words that appeals to children.

'King's Cross! What shall we do?
 Leave him alone for a minute or two!
 concludes one, and another tells how
 'Wormwood scrubs the London streets,
 Wormwood scrubs St Pauls . . .'

Although, at times, her delight in words carried her away too lightly there are perfectly shaped lyrics amongst the slighter ones to redeem her, like this, which says so much in a short space:

'The night will never stay,
 The night will still go by,
 Though with a million stars
 You pin it to the sky
 Though you bind it with the blowing wind
 And buckle it with the moon,
 The night will slip away
 Like sorrow or a tune.'

The Children's Bells (OUP, 1957) contains a wide selection. Here the poems spring from her vast store of knowledge. There are verses on kings and heroes, saints and fairy lore, special days and customs. Like the earlier *Book of Days*, this is a godsend to teachers stuck for an assembly idea. 'Mrs Malone' (first published in *Silver-sand and Snow*) has become almost synonymous with Eleanor Farjeon; the old woman whose 'heart was so big

She had room for them all . . .'

recalls the writer whose great gift for friendship is still talked about.

In her poem 'English' she tells young readers
 'Get while you are young
 The gift of English words.'

For nearly all of her 84 years she treasured this gift. Poetry always made her

'See, hear, and feel something that prose
 Cannot; and what it is, who knows?'

Details of books mentioned and some others of interest.

The Little Bookroom
 OUP, 1955, reissued New
 Oxford Library series, 1979,
 0 19 277099 3, £1.80 (ill.
 Edward Ardizzone)

The Old Nurse's Stocking Basket
 OUP, 1965, reissued new
 Oxford Library series, 1979,
 0 19 277093 4, £1.80
 Puffin, reissued 1981,
 0 14 03.1220 X, 80p (ill.
 Edward Ardizzone)

The Silver Curlew
 OUP, 1953, reissued New
 Oxford Library series, 1979,
 0 19 277057 8, £1.50 (ill.
 Ernest Shepard)

Jim at the Corner
 OUP, 1958, 0 19 271056 7,
 £2.00 (ill. Edward Ardizzone)

A Nursery in the Nineties
 OUP, 1980, 0 19 281308 0,
 £3.95 pb

Edward Thomas, the Last Four Years
 OUP, 1979, 0 19 281276 9,
 £2.50 pb

Nursery Rhymes of London Town
 Duckworth, 1917,
 0 7156 0736 7, £1.95

The rest are now out of print.

Eleanor Farjeon's poems are frequently included in anthologies for children such as:

A Puffin Quartet of Poets,
 1958, 0 14 03.0121 6, 90p.

A new selection, chosen by her niece Annabel Farjeon and illustrated by Antony Maitland, is to be published this June:

Invitation to a Mouse and other Poems, Pelham,
 07207 1322 6, £4.95.



Lloyds Bank

is pleased to support The School Bookshop Association

MONEY – THE FACTS OF LIFE

6th edition by W. Reay Tolfree

As part of a continuing programme of educational sponsorship this book has been produced by the Bank, in association with the publishers, Woodhead-Faulkner Limited, 8 Market Passage, Cambridge.

Written for those starting in regular employment for the first time, the book contains useful information such as how wages and salaries are paid, how to look after money and how to budget. Suitable for school-leavers, students, and teachers instructing in money matters.

Copies from booksellers or, in cases of difficulty, direct from the publishers.

Price £1.

MONEY – THE FACTS OF LIFE

Audio-Visual Presentation

A new audio-visual teaching pack based on the book has now been produced, comprising four 20-minute filmstrips with accompanying cassettes, teachers' notes, suggested projects and a copy of the book.

Specifically for classroom use, the filmstrips trace the early working lives of two cartoon characters, Zack and Zelda, through numerous drawings, photographs and charts, combined with a lively informative soundtrack.

Each pack costs £30 plus VAT and is available under special preview offer from Public Relations Department (FS), Lloyds Bank, 71 Lombard Street, London EC3P 3BS.

The 16th Eleanor Farjeon Award

Each year the Children's Book Circle gives the Eleanor Farjeon Award to someone 'for distinguished services to children's books'. The award last year went to Dorothy Butler and previous recipients have been, among others, Elaine Moss, Kaye Webb and Margery Fisher. In 1977 Peter Kennerley was given the award for his work for school bookshops.

This year the prize has been increased to £500 with the help of a grant from the Arts Council and the award is shared by two people: Margaret Marshall and Virginia Allen Jensen. Both are involved in working with and for handicapped children so it is appropriate that the award should go to them in the International Year of Disabled People.

Margaret Marshall has been a teacher, a librarian, past chairman of the Youth Libraries Group and was until recently Senior Lecturer in Librarianship at Leeds Polytechnic. Eight years ago she started working with subnormal children, doing a weekly storytelling session. About four years ago she embarked upon deep research into books and the handicapped child which resulted in her book *Libraries and the Handicapped Child* (Deutsch, 0 233 97299 4, £8.95) published earlier this year. The book lays down clear criteria for ordinary children's books which are suitable for children with differing handicaps. It also surveys books created specifically for



Margaret Marshall



Virginia Allen Jensen

the handicapped child (very few), and books about handicapped children. Appropriately Margaret Marshall commends Dorothy Butler's *Cushla and her Books*, a moving and inspiring account of the role books played in helping her multiply handicapped granddaughter to grow and develop as a person. In a recent article Margaret Marshall wrote of the importance of 'ensuring that the handicapped child not only has the right to read but has access to the books that will enable him to do so.'

Margaret Marshall has recently moved to Potters Bar where she lives with her second husband and their five children. She helps at a playgroup and does freelance writing, lecturing and reviewing.

Virginia Allen Jensen was born in the Mid-West of the United States, 50 years ago. Her career in writing for children began shortly after her marriage in 1954 to a Dane when she went to live in Denmark. Finding no material suitable for young children learning English, she wrote her own. Her interest in the visually handicapped began on a visit to Stockholm. She asked a young teacher what materials he gave to blind children to introduce them to books, and learned that for young children there was nothing available. Virginia began thinking about how a picture book could be produced for the blind, and in the nine years that followed she strove to find, and then to write it.

At the International Children's Book Service in Gentofte in Denmark, where Virginia works, she enlisted the help of a colleague — Dorcas Woodbury Haller. The result was *What's That?*, a story with shapes for characters. Raised surfaces meant it could be 'read' by feeling. Virginia received tremendous help and encouragement from the blind centres, institutes for the blind throughout the world, from parents, teachers and many others. The printers who produced the raised surface pictures spent four years experimenting with the production and built an entire new machine to print the book — without earning any money at all. The Nordic Cultural Fund and the Nordic Bank paid for the initial printing to produce sample copies for all the institutes throughout the world whose advice had to be sought.

Last year a second book *Red Thread Riddles* was produced for UNESCO. A combination of braille, raised surface illustration and printed text make this a book which visually handicapped and sighted children can share. ●

What's That?, V. Jensen and D. Haller, Collins, 0 00 195910 7, £3.95

Red Thread Riddles, V. Jensen and P. Edman, Collins, 0 00 195655 8, £3.95



BIG BOOKSELLERS?

Mean and myopic says David Bennett

My experiences of small local booksellers have been as obliging and dedicated allies, doing sterling work for the school bookshop movement. Profitability, haggling over discounts, necessary safeguards, never entered into things. We saw ourselves as partners in the business of setting up an outpost of the shop in my school. They supplied the books and I provided all the facilities and hard work, in return for a modest discount.

My current local bookseller recognises that my young customers are very likely to visit his bookshop, which is fairly near to school, and his business with me has spin-offs in terms of official school orders for text books. Added to which, the £1000 or so that I take in a year represents custom which he would otherwise not have had.

The small local bookseller can more easily identify with us and appreciate those intangible services to children we are aiming to provide — only a fool would see the bookshop solely in terms of School Fund money. The personal approach of his own business is akin to our approach. We want children to enjoy and appreciate books, to see the potential of books, and we attempt to achieve this by encouraging the choice and ownership of books. To do this well, we are usually working at a very time-consuming and tiring labour of love yet, in the process, we reach children whom booksellers seem unable to contact, but who will be potential book-buyers long after they have passed beyond the influence and persuasion of school.

But what of the big chain booksellers? Often my more lavish enterprises have required quantities of books that are more than a small supplier can reasonably be expected to provide, or would want to be left with on a sale-or-return basis. I can expect to take as much cash in three days as

the average school bookshop takes in a year, or local bookshop in a week, so I have gone to a big chain shop, part of an international group of companies. Suddenly the rapport is gone; the books themselves have become commodities like breakfast cereal or soap powder, and those educational values that prompt me to offer to promote a new market place for the shop are swept aside as irrelevant by the succession of desk-bound administrators with whom I have to deal. What becomes singularly pertinent is that I can guarantee to select, collect, sell and return personally, pay for all loss or damage, put down a deposit, not ask for more than 10% discount and be grateful. Remember the recession; things are tight all round.

What I do remember is the expanding population of bored young people, many unemployed and trying to cope with increased leisure, who are trailing in and out of clothes and record shops, or else drifting around aimlessly, never thinking to visit a bookshop. If our more powerful booksellers were to glance up from their account books, which seem to be making them myopic, and peer out into the precincts beyond their plate-glass doors, they would realise that they must increase their support and encouragement for the school bookshop movement, for the bookshops which we struggle to maintain. Their profits can never be so slender that they can be exonerated from doing all that is required in education for reading for leisure. It is fortunate that teachers being what they are, some schools will still have bookshops whatever the obstacles, but how much more effectively would we realise our ideals if all booksellers could perceive their obligations and were better disposed to play a more positive part which, after all, can only be in their own best interests in the long run. ●