



BfK Briefing ? July 1999

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Carnegie/Greenaway Shortlists<!--break-->

The Library Association's Carnegie and Kate Greenaway Medal winners will be announced on July 14th. The shortlists are:

THE CARNEGIE MEDAL

Skellig by David Almond (Hodder Children's Books)

Heroes by Robert Cormier (Hamish Hamilton)

The Kin by Peter Dickinson (Macmillan)

Fly, Cherokee, Fly by Chris d'Lacey (Corgi Yearling)

The Sterkarm Handshake by Susan Price (Scholastic)

THE KATE GREENAWAY MEDAL

The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe, ill. Christian Birmingham (Collins)

Zagazoo by Quentin Blake (Cape)

Voices in the Park by Anthony Browne (Doubleday)

I Love You, Blue Kangaroo by Emma Chichester Clark (Andersen Press)

The Lion & the Unicorn by Shirley Hughes (The Bodley Head)

Come on, Daisy! by Jane Simmons (Orchard Books)

NEWS

Sweet Valley Low

Following a decline in sales, Transworld is to stop publishing Sweet Valley High titles and concentrate on more UK-originated series.

Kipling Wrong Shock

Zoologists at the University of Melbourne have claimed that the elephant's trunk evolved as a snorkel for underwater breathing not, as Rudyard Kipling suggested, as the result of a tug-of-war with a crocodile. A study of elephant embryos has found that the world's biggest land-based mammal may once have lived an aquatic existence and may be closely related to sea cows.

Books for Boys

The Secretary of State for Education and Employment has urged teachers to use more 'boy friendly' books to try to close the gender gap in achieving the target level of reading. At the moment nearly 80% of 11-year-old girls achieved it compared to fewer than two-thirds of boys. On David Blunkett's list of recommended titles are 'adventure stories' by authors such as Daniel Defoe, R L Stevenson and H G Wells. **BfK** readers will find more up to date recommendations in our feature 'Reading for Pleasure ? Boys' (**BfK** No.108, Jan. '98).

Mrs Mad's Book-a-Rama Mrs Mad's Book-a-Rama is a new website for young readers, teachers and parents at (www.isnt.co.uk [2]). It has reviews of children's books, a chance to contribute your own reviews, an interactive story and links to other useful sites.

PEOPLE

The joint winners of the Children's Books Ireland Award for outstanding services to children's literature were **Rena Dardis**, founder of the Children's Press, and her first two authors, **Tony Hickey** and **Carolyn Swift**.

Helen Boothroyd has been appointed to the post of School Library Service Manager with advisory responsibility for Children's Services in Suffolk. She previously worked in Bedfordshire, moving to Hertfordshire in 1985, where she started off as the Secondary Resources Co-ordinator. Most recently, she has been one of two Joint Heads of the School Library Service.

Following a successful bid to the National Lottery by **Anne Everall** to fund an ambitious project called 'Young Readers UK?', the first Young Readers UK Festival took place in Birmingham in May and June this year. The Manager of Centre for the Child in Birmingham, Everall is now Young Readers UK's full-time Director for the next three years.

Susie Gibbs has been appointed Editorial Director, Mammoth Non-Fiction at Egmont Children's Books.

Alec Williams, formerly Head of Children's Services with Leeds Library & Information Service, left Leeds in March and is now working in a variety of freelance areas. Alec is already involved in a research project on school library services, training courses for school librarians and direct work with children through storytelling and poetry sessions in schools. He is also planning projects involving website design and booklist creation. He can be contacted on 01422 843440 or email on alec@43hl.freeseve.co.uk [3].

Fiction publisher at Hodder Children's Books, **Isabel Boissier**, has been appointed to the board as Editorial Director.

Children's writers **Caroline Pitcher**, **Jane Stemp** and **Beverley Naidoo** have received Arts Council of England Writers Awards to enable them to finish a work in progress.

Contributors: BfK team, Anne Marley. Submissions welcome

OBITUARY

Henrietta Branford

1946?1999

Anne Marley of Hampshire Library Services and Clive Barnes of Southampton Library Services write:

Henrietta Branford, who died of breast cancer at the end of April, was one of the most talented writers of children's fiction to emerge in the last decade.

Henrietta started writing rather late in life, after her children were at school. She gave herself a year to get started, went to an adult education creative writing class at Southampton University, and never looked back. Her second published children's book, **Dimanche Diller**, made her name in 1994. It won a Smarties book prize and was shortlisted for the **Guardian** Children's Book Award. In 1997, her brilliant novel, **Fire, Bed and Bone**, which tells the story of the Peasants' Revolt in medieval England through the eyes of a dog, won her the **Guardian** Children's Book Award, another Smarties prize, and was Highly Commended by the judges of the Carnegie Award.

In a tragically short career, Henrietta showed that she was a versatile writer. Her books range from the absurdly funny to the brutally realistic, from fairy tales to historical novels, from picture books to books for teenagers. She was particularly fond of **Space Baby** ? a book which was very popular with children and was one of the five most chosen books from a range of free books offered by **The Times** this year.

She was a gentle, modest person with a fierce imagination that was unlike that of any other writer for children. She was passionate about books, children, and education and she was generous in the time she gave to supporting other writers, local libraries and schools. She served as a governor of a secondary school in Southampton, where she lived, and, in one of her last public appearances, spoke to student teachers at New College in Southampton last November, urging them to offer the best books to children.

She continued to write throughout her illness: and if there is one thing that her books have in common, it is the courage to take life as it comes, shake it and make it better. Whether her characters are human, like the feisty, irrepressible **Dimanche Diller**, or animal, like the 'old bitch' of **Fire, Bed and Bone**, they take on their troubles with determination, grace, compassion and humour. This was the message that Henrietta believed that children deserve.

PUBLICATIONS

An updated edition of **100 Best Books** (Young Book Trust, 0 85353 479 9), an annotated guide to paperback fiction for children of all ages, is available from the Publications Dept, Book Trust, 45 East Hill, London SW18 2QZ at £2.20 inc. p&p.

Books to Enjoy 6?8 (0 900641 93 2) by Wendy Cooling is the third title in the School Library Association's very useful series of annotated guides for different age groups. (Already published are **Books to Enjoy: 8?12** and **Books to Enjoy: 12?16**.) £4.50 (£3.50 to SLA members) inc. p&p from SLA, Liden Library, Barrington Close, Liden, Swindon SN3 6HF.

The Samaritans has launched a **Youth Pack** aimed at 11?17 year-olds to help teachers address the issues of depression, anxiety and suicide among young people. It will be distributed free to all state secondary schools in England, Scotland and Wales. Copies for Independent schools are available for a small donation. Further information from The Samaritans General Office on 01753 216 500.

Invisible Art: Graphic Novels for Young People (0 86059 594 3) by Joss O'Kelly is an annotated guide to graphic novels for 12?18 year-olds published by the Library and Information Service for Schools, Buckinghamshire County Library. £5.95 (inc. p&p) from LISS, County Library, Walton Street, Aylesbury, Bucks HP20 1UU.

Who Next?: a Guide to Children's Authors (1 901786 17 X) edited by Norah Irvin and Lesley Cooper and published by the Library and Information Statistics Unit at Loughborough University lists 400 children's fiction authors and for each author suggests others who write in a similar way. By moving from one entry to another children can expand the number of writers they enjoy?. £11.99 (inc. p&p) from LISU, Loughborough University, Loughborough, Leicestershire LE11 3TU.

EVENTS

National Children's Book Week is from 4-10 October 1999. Practical resource material to help with book events is available from Book Trust. For a price list contact Book Trust, Book House, 45 East Hill, London SW18 2QZ (tel: 0181 516 2984).

A symposium, **Reading Pictures: Art, Narrative and Childhood** organised by Homerton College, Cambridge with the Fitzwilliam Museum will take place from 1-4 September. There will be contributions from, amongst others, Jane Doonan, Judith Graham, Margaret Meek and Victor Watson. Further information from Morag Styles on 01233 507281.

The World of Tintin, an exhibition to mark the seventy years since the boy reporter first appeared, will be at the Discovery Museum in Newcastle in association with The Centre for the Children's Book from 15 July to 5 September. Further information from Elizabeth Hammill or Mary Briggs on 0191 274 3941.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Illustrated Books in France

Dear Editor

I refer to Dr Cotton's letter (**BfK** No.116) endorsing Quentin Blake's article on French picture books, and her own project, funded by the EU, to help children understand more about each other through picture books.

However admirable this project is, the fact remains that there is no demand for continental picture books in Great Britain.

The latest title on our list reviewed by Quentin Blake in your last issue is a perfect example of this: **And If the Moon Could Talk** originally published by Gallimard in France to great acclaim (winner of the Boston Globe Award and included among the 100 Best Books by the **New York Times**) once again proved to me that books from the Continent simply don't sell in Great Britain. Our sales for the first four months: 450 copies.

Klaus Flugge

Andersen Press, 20 Vauxhall Bridge Road, London SW1V 2SA

The Gotcha Smile

Dear Editor

Your recent review of **The Gotcha Smile** by Rita Phillips Mitchell left me quite baffled (**BfK** No.114). My children enjoyed it immensely. There was nothing in the story which was harmful and why this book should be used judiciously is beyond me. Also, the fact that Clarine is a little 'black' girl is irrelevant; this could have been any little girl.

T. Chambers

Enfield, Middlesex

Dear Editor

I was extremely disappointed when I read your review of Rita Phillips Mitchell's **The Gotcha Smile**. The book, in my view, deserves a far higher star rating. I do not believe that it was written purely as a guide for children starting at a new school and it is wrong to judge it in that light alone.

Miss Phillips Mitchell's books always have a wonderful 'feel good' atmosphere about them. If they have a therapeutic effect, so much the better. Her story is simply told with great charm. I think it is unlikely to 'make the situation worse?'; children do not judge one another in the way adults do.

Vivien Cockcroft

Banbury, Oxfordshire

BfK also received letters on this topic from Janet Greenyer of London and D. Lewis of Romford.

There are still far too few children's books published that feature people from minority groups in our society, eg ethnic minorities or people with disabilities. Many BfK

readers actively seek out books which will help to redress this imbalance for the children they work with or live with. It is therefore my policy that our reviewers inform our readership when the central character in the book they are discussing is from a minority group even if this is not central to the story. This is not intended to imply that the book in question is not relevant to all children in our society and I do not believe that our readership is so parochial as to make such an assumption. Ed.

BfK reviewer, Judith Sharman, writes:

*On one level the message in **The Gotcha Smile** certainly works ? we know that smiling helps to reduce stress and tension and a more relaxed child will probably give off more confident 'vibes' to others. Some of the Year Two pupils reviewing this picture book for me thought it was very good and liked the idea of Grandpa's 'gotcha smile'.*

Other children in the two classes, however, stressed the possible reaction of other children in Clarine's class to Clarine's smile, given the difficult start that had already taken place. They pointed out that they might think that she was 'smirking because she thought she was better than them?', 'laughing at them?' or that she was 'peculiar'.

It is my policy to listen hard to children's views particularly in the case of books with a 'message?'. Books are powerful tools for good and this book certainly sparked off a great deal of discussion amongst the children at our school. As I wrote in the review ? the book could prove useful for encouraging empathy in a receiving group of children. It is, though, vital that such books do not promise a solution too easily. Parents and other adults may not be aware of the extent of the difficulties that a child is facing at school. A young child can often not fully articulate the degree of isolation or fear that they feel to adults around them. Were a child being bullied the strategy of the 'gotcha smile?' could be misinterpreted and make a difficult situation far worse.

Letters may be shortened for space reasons

BfS

BEST SELLER CHART

TOP 10 FANTASY BOOKS

November 1998 ? April 1999

1 Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone, J K Rowling, Bloomsbury, £4.99

2 The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe, C S Lewis, Collins, £3.99

3 The Iron Man, Ted Hughes, Faber, £4.99

4 The Hobbit, J R R Tolkien, Collins, £5.99

5 The Magician's Nephew, C S Lewis, Collins, £3.99

6 Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets, J K Rowling, Bloomsbury, £4.99

7 The Horse and his Boy, C S Lewis, Collins, £3.99

8 The Last Battle, C S Lewis, Collins, £3.99

9 Mossflower, Brian Jacques, Red Fox, £4.99

10 The Silver Chair, C S Lewis, Collins, £3.99

An interesting mix of old and new ? the perennial popularity of C S Lewis's Narnia books sees no less than five of the seven titles in the top ten. But the new superstar of children's fiction, Harry Potter, is much in evidence too. It will be interesting to see how Potter and Narnia battle it out once all the Harry Potter books have been published!

This listing has been specially compiled for **BfK** by **Books for Students** from their sales data. **Books for Students Ltd** is a major specialist supply company to schools and libraries.

PRIZES

The Signal Poetry Award

The **Signal Poetry Award** has been won by Jackie Kay's **The Frog who Dreamed She Was an Opera Singer** (Bloomsbury). Kay was described by judge Margaret Meek as 'a poet of surprises, vision, being, and the lining of these things?'. Roger McGough's **The Ring of Words** (Faber & Faber) was Highly Commended.

The Rhône-Poulenc Prize for Science Books

This year's Junior shortlist for the Rhône-Poulenc Prize **Ask Uncle Albert: 100½ Trick Science Questions Answered** by Russell Stannard (Faber), **Science School** by Mick Manning and Brita Granström (Kingfisher), **The Usborne Complete Book of the Microscope** by Kirsteen Rogers (Usborne), **The Marshall Children's Guide to Astronomy** by Jacqueline and Simon Mitton (Marshall Publishing), **Big Head!** by Dr Pete Rowan (The Bodley Head) and **Stephen Biesty's Incredible Body** by Richard Platt (Dorling Kindersley). The shortlist was chosen by Nick Arnold (Chair), Caroline Horn of the **Bookseller**, teacher and Head of Science Becky Parker, Professor David Phillips of Imperial College and children's writer Jacqueline Wilson. The winner will be chosen by children from 22 schools. The prize is £10,000.

BFC Mother Goose Award

This year's winner of the BFC Mother Goose Award is Niamh Sharkey for **The Gigantic Turnip and Tales of Wisdom and Wonder** (Barefoot Books). Sharkey was presented with a gilded goose egg and a cheque for £1000. The runners-up were Simon Bartram for **Pinocchio** (Dorling Kindersley), Adrian Johnson for **What!** (Bloomsbury Children's Books) and David Roberts for **Frankie Stein's Robot** (Macdonald Young Books).

Bisto/Children's Books Ireland Book of the Year

The shortlist for the Bisto/CBI Book of the Year is **All the Way from China** by Pat Boran and Stewart Curry (Poolbeg Press), **Ride a Pale Horse** by Tom McCaughren (Anvil Press), **An Rógairé agus an Spáil** by Gabriel Rosenstock and Piet Sluis (An Gúm), **Tales of Wisdom and Wonder** by Niamh Sharkey (Barefoot Books), **Bert's Wonderful News** by Sam McBratney (Walker Books), **The Gigantic Turnip** by Niamh Sharkey (Barefoot Books), **Dea-Scéal** by Catriona Hastings (Cló Iar-Chonnacht), **The Long March** by Marie-Louise Fitzpatrick (Wolfhound Press), **Please Be Quiet!** by Mary Murphy (Methuen) and **The Moon King** by Siobhán Parkinson (O'Brien Press).

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