



## Editorial - May 2003

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News and comment from the Editor.

John Burningham's work features on the back page of this issue of **BfK** where Brian Alderson <!--break-->focuses on the incomparable **Mr Gumpy's Outing**. This deeply satisfying and original book thus stands alongside Sendak's **Where the Wild Things Are** as the only other picture book by a living artist to be featured so far in our 'Classics in Short' series.

Burningham's work crops up again in the feature on picture books on page 7 where Joanna Carey discusses the 40th anniversary edition of his first picture book, **Borka, the Adventures of a Goose with no Feathers**. In his introduction to this celebratory edition, publisher Tom Maschler, who went out on a limb to publish **Borka** in 1963, tells us that the aspect of Burningham's talent which he then admired and continues to admire above all is 'his capacity to move readers - children and adults equally'. 'There was one picture especially which I found extraordinary,' he writes about **Borka**. 'It was of a mother goose knitting a vest for its child born with no feathers and the child looks on poised and eagerly expectant.' Both **Borka** (1963) and **Mr Gumpy's Outing** (1970) were to be Kate Greenaway Medal winners.

Burningham's latest book, **The Magic Bed**, with its pale crayon tints and dramatic washes, has that same consummate ability to communicate emotion via words and pictures. Georgie's cot is now too small for him and a bed, which happens to be magic, is bought from a junk shop for the growing boy. When Georgie says the right word the bed takes him off to different worlds of adventure and experience - there he is, storytelling with gnomes and fairies, returning a lost tiger cub to its anxious parents, swimming with dolphins. These adventure spreads have the quality of a dreamlike condensation of experience and contrast with, while appearing to spring from, 'real' life. In some ways, this new book revisits the conventions established by Burningham in his bleakly touching **Come Away From the Water, Shirley** (1977) in which 'reality' is contrasted with daydream although, as ever, Burningham's work continues to be new and challenging.

John Burningham's work will be celebrated at greater length in a major **BfK** feature by Brian Alderson later this year. In the meantime, warm congratulations to him from **BfK** on **Borka's** 40th anniversary.



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