



Sound & Vision - September 1981

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News of books on television and in the cinema.

STARTING IN SEPTEMBER

Stig of the Dump

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Umpteen reprints in Puffin. 18 years-worth of children who love the book, and the love of a television producer have finally coalesced to bring about a TV series which is bound to be very popular. **Stig of the Dump** will be appearing on your screens from 28th September on Thames TV at 5.30 on Mondays and Wednesdays. In all there will be ten 15-minute programmes, and Puffin have re-issued the paperback with a new jacket, incorporating stills from the series, price 90p.

Sheila Kinany was the producer. and she said that she 'just loved the book. My children read it and loved it, and I was so pleased when the idea of doing it was accepted. So many children know the book so well, my main ambition was to be as faithful to it as possible. That's very difficult, what with leopards and all sorts of animals, and building a sort of Stonehenge.'

Liz Brown at Thames thinks, however, that the dramatisation is very faithful to the book. 'We used a leopard from a local zoo, and overcame most of the other problems. The series is intended for children of the same age range as the book - about 7 to 10 - and lots of schools and LEA's have already said they were pleased we were doing it because it's such a highly regarded book.'

The actor who plays Stig himself will be instantly recognisable to avid television viewers despite the heavy make-up. Keith Jayne, who is in fact 20, played the cabin boy Tom Arnold in **The Onedin Line**, and more recently the character of Francis in **Scarf Jack** (based on the novel by P. J. Kavanagh).

Vice Versa

Puffin are doing well for TV tie-ins at the moment. ATV began a networked seven-part serialisation of the F. Anstey classic, **Vice Versa**, on 13th September. The half-hour programmes (directed by Ron Francis), star Peter Bowles and Paul Spurrier as the father and son who exchange lives for a couple of months, because pompous Mr Bultitude happened to be holding a magic stone when he said he wouldn't mind being a boy again.

Penguin have issued the book (first published in 1882) in two formats. One is a Puffin (with maroon cover) and one a Penguin to catch the adult market, in green and orange. Both editions are £1.25.

The Book of the Film

The Time Bandits

Grant Ashley-Warnock, who plays the main character of Barney in **Stig**, is the brother of Craig who stars in the latest production from Terry Gilliam and Michael Palin of Monty Python fame. The film, which was released in July, gathered some excellent reviews, and it's a bizarre story of young Kevin, who is whirled off in an adventure through time and space with the bandits of the title - six dwarves. He even meets The Supreme Being - Ralph Richardson in an ill-fitting suit.

Meanwhile Sparrow have rushed out a book of the film, written by Charles Alverson and based on the screenplay (95p). It also includes black and white stills from the film. Matt Triggs (aged 12) saw the film and enjoyed it immensely, but was a little lukewarm towards the book.

'It told the story, all right. but it isn't very funny because you can't *hear* the film. The jokes are in the sound of John Cleese's voice. and that doesn't come over. Lots of the funny bits in the film were visual. and they feel a bit flat in the book, so it's not very good. Not bad if you're seen the film though and you want to re-live it.'

The Great Muppet Caper

Another book of the film (and it says so on the cover!) is **The Great Muppet Caper** (Michael Joseph, £3.95). The same strictures apply as with **The Time Bandits** book. Anyone who's seen the film (and there must be many kids who have) may enjoy reading a re-written screenplay, and there are plenty of colour stills from the film. But it's unlikely to re-create the atmosphere of a film which includes a lot of music and spectacle, so it could mean some disappointment for a mini-Muppets fan.

Why Didn't They Tell the Horses?

Hippomaniac (that's horse-mad) kids who were enthralled by K. M. Peyton's **Flambards** (both in Puffin and on Yorkshire Television) may be interested in a 'background' book - yet another Puffin. **Why Didn't They Tell the Horses?** (Puffin Plus, 95p) was written by Christine McKenna, who starred as the heroine of the TV series, and is about her efforts to learn to ride before - and during filming.

Flambards features horses (as well as aeroplanes) in a big way, and Christine told a small white lie to get such a plum part, saying she knew all about horses and was an accomplished rider when her only encounter with an animal vaguely equine was with an 'endearing donkey' on the Isle of Man. Within a very short time Christine admits that 'her life had changed' and she was a horse fanatic. She's also playing a part in the revival of side-saddle riding, which featured in the **Flambards** series, and is a committed member of the Ladies' Side--Saddle Association.

The idea for the book came one evening when she was with her trainer, Sue Turner, trying to think of a name for a Side-Saddle Association showjumping event. She came up with the wonderful 'A Bit on the Side', which was rejected. It was also eventually rejected as the title of the book (although it is the title of the first chapter), but the idea had been planted, and she trotted off to see Tony Lacey at Puffin, who couldn't rein himself back and commissioned the book on the spot.

'We clinched it in about 10 seconds,' said Christine, 'and when I came out of his office I was a bit stunned. I'd promised to deliver the first chapter by the end of the week after, so I rang Kathleen Peyton, who's now a great friend, and just shouted "Help!" She told me I must be mad.'

But the first chapter was delivered on time, and the whole book was in fact finished by the end of the same month. In its final form it consists of anecdotes (hilarious) from the filming of the series and relating to (mostly) runaway horses, inter-leaved with commentary (serious) from trainer Sue Turner on safety aspects and riding technique - all with a side-saddle slant.

Christine's now working on a second book for Puffin - 'in the same vein as the first. It's all about learning to be an actor for kids who like the idea, based on my personal experiences. Really it's a series of calamities.

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