



Sound & Vision - November 1981

Article Author:

[Pat Triggs](#) [1]

[11](#) [2]

Article Category:

Sound & Vision

Byline:

News of books on television.

A new presenter for **The Book Tower**

The Book Tower, Yorkshire TV's award-winning programme about children's books, is back for a fourth series at the end of December. <!--break-->Tom Baker, who seems to be fleeing from children's programmes like a determined lemming, has retired as presenter and in his place comes Stephen Moore, an actor perhaps better known to adults than to children. He has the personality to make the part his own - and the sort of face that looks as if it might at any minute do something quite unexpected. Useful if you want to keep 'em watching.

Watchers' Guides and Posters are available while stocks last. Apply to **The Book Tower**, Yorkshire TV, TV Centre, Leeds LS3 1 JS.

Watch Out

At Christmas - for a Frank and Polly Muir programme based on **Big Dipper**, their jolly miscellany of stories, poems, jokes, cartoons and pictures.

In the New Year - for **The Treasure Seekers**, a series in six episodes clone of the best-loved E. Nesbit stories. It's scheduled to start on BBC on 6th January at 5.00 p.m.

Puffin are reissuing the book with a new cover. If you've ever wondered what 1 Effingham Road, Lee was like, look closely at that cover - it was photographed in Richard and Angie's back garden. Lee, you may remember, is not so far from Eltham which is real E. Nesbit country.

A Timely Re-run

David Attenborough's **Life on Earth** returned to the TV screen on 4th November for a thirteen- week re-run, almost exactly coincidentally with the publication of **Discovering Life on Earth**, the new version for younger readers of the now famous book of the series. In July's **Books for Keeps** we featured an interview with David Attenborough about communicating ideas and information. Talking about the new version, he showed us some of the 550 new full -colour pictures. Apart from being visually stunning they were very carefully chosen to be easy for children to read. The research to find the right ones had quite clearly been extensive and exhaustive. If a new young audience for this series emerges they will be well served by this particular spin-off.

Discovering Life on Earth, Collins, 0 00 195147 5, £6.95 hb and 0 00 195148 3, £4.95 pb.

Theatre Box

Theatre Box, a series of six single plays for 8-12 year olds, began transmission at the beginning of November. It aims to introduce children to drama and encourage them to attempt to mount their own productions.

Thames-Methuen is publishing acting editions of all six plays to coincide with each transmission, followed by an anthology. This will include television scripts adapted for the stage, plus full instructions on every aspect of production from the read-through to performance. The anthology is edited with introductions by children's theatre producer. Jonathan Dudley.

The four half-hour plays include **Marmalade Atkins in Space** by Andrew Davies about an unpleasant little girl who defies all reasonable attempts to improve her manners (Blackie are also publishing a version in novel form) and **The Prince and the Demons** based on an extract from the Ramayana.

On Monday 7th December at 4.15 p.m. you can see the first of the one-hour plays, **School for Clowns**, translated from Waechter's original German by Ken Campbell, who appears as the 'Master'. Professor Molereasons, whose job it is to instil in his four pupils the basic techniques of clowning. The cast also includes award-winning actor Jonathan Pryce. and the play is directed by Ian McNaughton.

The last play goes out on Christmas Eve. **You Must Believe All This** is an hour-long musical play by Adrian Mitchell, based on stories by Charles Dickens, with music by Andrew Dickson and Nick Bacat.

Set in Victorian London. it uses the 'play-within-a-play' technique. Robin, William, Alice and Nettie, sent to bed after being too honest to teachers and their parents at their baby brother's christening, decide to educate adults about how children should be treated, through a magazine entitled **You Must Believe All This**. 'You don't have to believe the stories really happen, but you must believe what the stories say.' The children act out **The Magic Wishbone**, **The Dangers of Captain Boldheart**, and **The School for Parents** - all of which offer lessons still applicable to adults today.

(For more about drama for children, see *The Play's the Thing - or is it*, page 26)

A New Hero for the Under-fives

Postman Pat and his black and white cat have made lots of small friends since they first appeared earlier this autumn on **See-Saw** (BBC's replacement for **Watch with Mother**).

The television series was created by Ivor Wood (who also did **The Wombles**) but the two books so far from the series have been illustrated by Celia Berridge. I'm a great admirer of Ivor Wood but I don't believe he could have improved on these bright lively pictures so full of good humour. Skilfully, Celia Berridge has made them sufficiently Ivor Wood-like not to confuse young viewers but they are still very much her own. John Cunliffe (well-known for his 'Farmer Barnes' books) wrote the stories. They are simple cumulative tales and Pat's journeys around the Dales in 'the mail van keep things moving nicely from one familiar character to another. Just right. It's a pity the type is so small and close-packed - the language is well-suited to early reading. There are thirteen more episodes of **Postman Pat** scheduled for next Spring.

Postman Pat and the Mystery Thief, John Cunliffe, Deutsch, 0 233 97417 2, £1.95

Postman Pat's Treasure Hunt, John Cunliffe, Deutsch, 0 233 97418 0, £1 .95

Barriers

Earlier this year a new drama serial for teenagers from Tyne Tees caused quite a stir. Audiences were large (8-9 million); critical acclaim and awards abounded. **Barriers** won the 1981 Gold Medal for Children's Drama at the Television Festival of New York. William Corlett who wrote the script won the Pye Colour Television Award for the Best Children's Television Writer of 1981.

In November and December seven more episodes are on our screens and Judy Allen's novel, adapted from the series, is in the shops.

Barriers

Judy Allen, Hamish Hamilton, 0 241 10718 0, £5.25

Page Number:

23

Source URL (retrieved on Feb '20): <http://savfkn.booksforkeeps.co.uk/issue/11/childrens-books/articles/sound-vision/sound-vision-november-1981>

Links:

[1] <http://savfkn.booksforkeeps.co.uk/member/pat-triggs>

[2] <http://savfkn.booksforkeeps.co.uk/issue/11>