



Editorial ? January 1984

Article Author:

[Pat Triggs](#) [1]

[24](#) [2]

Article Category:

Editorial

Byline:

News and comment from the Editor.

Well, here it is at last: 1984, coming in on a flood of reference, reappraisal and rip-off (Big Brother T shirts are on their way) of George Orwell's 'prophetic' book. How should BfK mark the arrival of this singularly literary year? In the bleak world of Orwell's *Airstrip One* novels are written by machines attended by workers with oily hands and spanners. The microchip reality of our 1984 is cleaner and less spanner-based but there is much debate about the future of the book. An appropriate moment, we thought, in our voyage around the World of Children's Books to land at NBL island and ask Martyn Goff to give us his view of where we stand. Martyn, as Director of the National Book League and Chairman of the School Bookshop Association, is an ideal person to offer a perspective to take us into the future beyond 1984.

<!--break-->

The Nearer View

Meanwhile-crystal gazing apart - what has the book world in store for 1984? More determined attempts to sell books by inviting us to join in treasure hunts and competitions are on the way. **Masquerade** has already had its imitators. This year Cape and Kit Williams (the author/artist of **Masquerade**) have joined forces again in **The New Kit Williams**. The gimmick is in the title. Only one copy of this story of Ambrose the bee-keeper is titled: that lies sealed up appropriately in a marquetry bee-box, guarded by a pure gold queen bee. Clues to the title are hidden in the pages of the book with its sixteen paintings. In 1985, a year and a day after publication (in May) Kit Williams will break the seal and the box and bee will go to the reader who has correctly identified the title.

Seems designed to keep people safe at home this time rather than digging up the countryside. Its Hamlyn who are encouraging us to do that. Starting this month and going through to Easter they announce a million pound promotion 'to get the whole country egg-cited'. Twelve golden eggs, 'each worth in excess of £10,000' have been buried around the country. Clues to the treasure's whereabouts are to be found in **Conundrum**, a picture book of twelve regional tales on the golden goose theme, written by Don Shaw and illustrated by Nick Price. The difference between this book and **Masquerade** is that **Conundrum** appears to have been a co-operative effort between the publishers, Cadbury's and Garrard the jewellers (who made the eggs). Both firms will be heavily involved in the advertising and promotion and the book is sub-titled, on the cover, **The Cadbury's creme egg mystery**. Last year we had the **Cadbury's First Book of Children's Poetry** (a Beaver/Hamlyn publication linked with the long-standing Cadburys National Exhibition of Children's Art which last year for the first time included a poetry section): this 'creme egg book seems to be taking sponsorship a stage further. Is it a predictor of future trends? Shall we be seeing more co-operative ventures between publishers and producers of child-directed products? Beanz Meanz Bookz? Five solve the Potato Crisps Mystery?

So many things now come sponsored. should books be an exception? Is there a 'special relationship' to be maintained between children and books or is that a pre-1984 idea? What do **you** think?'

Involving Kids

More conventional is the Children's Britain Competition 1984 being run by the Map and Guide Group of the Book Marketing Council in conjunction with John Craven. Children, in three age-groups up to 16. are asked either to draw a map or write a guide of any area in Britain they know well. Prizes include holiday trips abroad and in this country. atlases. maps and guides. It's hoped schools will be involved. (Details from Sue Kerpner, BMC. 19 Bedford Square, London WC1B 3HJ.) And a new venture, in this country at least, is Readathon '84, sponsored by Books for Students to 'encourage children to read more and learn to love reading' and 'to support and raise funds for Mencap. The idea is to have as many children as possible (250,000 it is hoped) involved in a sponsored read-in during the week May 28th-June 4th. (Details from Books for Students, 58-64 Berrington Road. Leamington Spa.) In the USA the National Multiple Sclerosis Society organised its first Readathon in 1974. That scheme too aims to raise funds and get kids reading. In ten years then claim that more than 12 million 6-12 year olds have been involved in the project. With widespread support and Brian Rix, David Bellamy, Sir Harry Secombe and Roald Dahl among its patrons the British Readathon looks to be off to a good start.

From Beaver to Kestrel

1984 brings changes for Sally Floyer who has just been appointed the new chief editor at Kestrel. Sally started the Beaver list at Hamlyn eight years ago and has been steadily developing its particular character. When we spoke to her about her new job she was at the mercy of some mixed emotions. 'I'm very excited about Kestrel. What a list to inherit! But I couldn't say' I am glad to be leaving Beaver. 'She is keen to face the challenges of a hardback list 'although my influence won't really be seen until 1985', and has a special interest in picture books. (Not surprising as Sally has two daughters (7 and 5) and two-year-old twin sons.) Caroline Sheldon at Hutchinson will now have charge of both Beaver and Sparrow lists but, Sally stresses, 'Beaver will definitely keep its separate identity.,

New Lifelines

Judith Elkin's very successful Lifeline Two on multicultural books came to an end in our last issue. Things are constantly moving and changing in this area and Judith is at present working on a series of Books for Keeps Guides which will extend and expand on her series of articles. One recent development has come out of Jennie Ingham's project on reading materials for an urban multicultural community. Traditional stories collected from the people of Haringey, Enfield and Barnet are being developed for publication and the first, **The Tiger and the Woodpecker**. is available this month. (£1 inc. p and p from Jennie at Middlesex Polytechnic Multicultural Study Centre, All Saints. White Hart Lane, London N17 8HR.) The story is a traditional fable, told by an Asian mother and illustrated by an English mother from the same locality. It is available in Bengali, Gujarati, Hindi. Punjabi and Urdu, each with English. Subsequent books are being offered directly' to commercial publishers and Jennie tells us there is a lot of interest in the material.

At **BfK** we are developing our third Lifeline series which starts in July. The idea this time is to focus specifically on books to work with in the classroom. Helping us are Joan Barker and David Bennett. experienced teachers in primary and secondary schools in Nottinghamshire. When last heard from. David was recovering from a four day Great Reading Rumbustification Book Fair. Margaret Mahy-Our-Authorgraph this issue. page 12 couldn't manage to be present as the Rumbustiauthor Or Rumbustiwriter (roles very adequately filled his Michael Hardcastle and Gwen Grant) but she did send 'messages and musings which all added to the Rumhustifun. We've been hearing a lot about your marvellously inventive Ideas for book fairs and the March BfK will include a **How to** feature packed with ideas and practical hints. the result of all this generous sharing. So if you want something to get you started on a book fair hug or small ... Watch this Space.

Cover Story

Have Cowboys and Indians had their day as the basis for child-grabbing project work Not by a long chalk if reactions to last year's BBC's **Watch ... Indians** were anything to go by: I saw Infant and lower Junior classrooms going wild about the American West. If there really is life in the old subject yet where are the books to sustain It? We asked publishers to

send us anything they thought relevant and passed it all on to Marc Pearce and her class of top juniors as the basis for our third Information please feature. Mary is the teacher librarian in her school so was able to test the material across the age range.

Among the books that came to us was **Going West** with pictures by Philippe Dupasquier and story by Martin Waddell. We liked it so much we decided to feature it on our cover. and subsequent tests have confirmed our feelings about it. Not only did it capture the Interest and attention of Mary's juniors, it completely took over the imaginative life of three and a half year old Robin Hill here at BfK. The adventures of Ma, Pa, Kate, Peter, Louisa, Big Chokes, Mr and Mrs Sullivan and Mr Ridger (all to be spotted on our cover as they get ready to leave town) in detailed pictures and simple text are rich and rewarding reading. A useful book for the classroom and one which we hope will prove W. H. Smith (who wouldn't take it) wrong when they told Klaus 'no-one is interested in Cowboys and Indians any more?.'

Philippe Dupasquier is a young Swiss artist who now lives in England with his French wife and young son, Timothy. His first picture book for Andersen Press was **The Great Green Mouse Disaster**, a wordless book based on an idea by Martin Waddell who called it a 'smash-bang-crash-story, very such a Martin Waddell idea.' Very different. he meant, from a Catherine Sefton idea. Catherine Sefton is Martin Waddell's other identity. created when he wrote **In a Blue Velvet Dress**, a story very different from the thrillers he'd become known for. 'Catherine writes ghost, gentle. suspense stories, very carefully built up and plotted. Martin is reserved for mad excitement and very direct writing.'

Going West has plenty of that. A good book, we think, to start the year. Let's hope 1984 has lots of good, non-machine written books in store.

A very happy new year from all at **BfK**.

Pat

Page Number:

3

Source URL (retrieved on Feb '20): <http://savfikn.booksforkeeps.co.uk/issue/24/childrens-books/articles/editorial/editorial-%E2%80%93-january-1984>

Links:

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

[2] <http://savfikn.booksforkeeps.co.uk/issue/24>