



## BfK News - July 1987

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Article Category:

BfK Briefing

Byline:

News about what's happening in the children's book world.

### **Eleanor Farjeon Award 1987 to Valerie Bierman**

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Many children could well have tailed to find the magic of books and reading had it not been for Valerie Bierman. Val is perhaps best known in Scotland where she is the organiser of the Edinburgh Children's Book Fair, the children's book reviewer of the *Scotsman* newspaper, a long-standing member of the committee of the Book Trust for Scotland and a still lively and active member of the Edinburgh Children's Book Group which she helped start in the mid seventies.

Val is a trained librarian and her interest in children's books was fuelled by her early experiences in the Lancashire County Library Service, especially on the mobile, and further extended when son, Paul, aged five, had his tonsils out and she began a reading in hospitals scheme. In 1983 Val received an award from the Scottish Arts Council in recognition of her contribution to the promotion of children's books in Scotland.

But the children whose lives she has touched can be found not only in Scotland but all over the British Isles and many thousands of miles away in Africa. In 1979 Val became chairperson of the Federation of Children's Book Groups and launched the Books for Zambia campaign. It was her hard work and sheer determination in the face of at times seemingly insuperable problems that ensured the eventual arrival in Zambia of enough books to stock a library.

The Bierman philosophy is simple and uncluttered by cant or self-conscious fashion - get children, authors and books together. For Val her best reward is the delighted faces of children meeting a REAL AUTHOR and being turned onto books. But it is more than fitting that this modest, talented and thoroughly professional 'amateur' should be the recipient of the children's book world's most prestigious award.

### **A Good Idea for Children's Book Week**

**Readathon** is a National Sponsored Read that is staged during Children's Book Week (the first week in October).

It raises money for the Malcolm Sargent Cancer Fund for Children - in 1986 over 75,000 children took part; they read 225,000 books and raised over a quarter of a million pounds.

It's very easy to do - you are sent all the sponsorship forms, advice on how to run it, and publicity material. There's even some classroom work to make sure that pupils understand what the money is being raised for.

An information sheet/ enrolment form is enclosed with this copy of **Books for Keeps**, or can be obtained from Readathon Office, Books for Students, Heathcote Estate, Warwick CV34 6TB (tel: 0926 314366).

Make sure your school has a really Good Read in Children's Book Week this year!

## **Publishing Moves**

### **A new Paperback Imprint**

In April a new bird arrived on the publishing scene. Swallow, launched in April, is a new paperback imprint from Scottish publisher, Richard Drew, aimed particularly at the older reader. The emphasis of the series is on quality fiction, including many award-winning books. Among the first eight (four more in August) are Rachel Anderson's **The War Orphan**, Peter Carter's **The Sentinels**, and two titles from Scottish author, Eileen Dunlop. All books are £2.25.

### **A new Fiction List**

Macdonald, well known for non-fiction, is moving into 'Picture Fiction' for 5-8 year olds and 'Junior Fiction' for 'children who have begun to enjoy books'. For older readers there is a mix of classic reprint (Barbara Willard's Mantlemass novels), new writers, and new editions of a ballet books series about Drina. First titles appear this summer; simultaneous publication in hardback and paperback.

### **A new Publisher**

Michael Bond, creator of Paddington Bear, has become a publisher. The first eight launch titles from Crocodile Books will appear in July. They are aimed at younger children and include four Paddington activity board books written by Michael and daughter Karen.

### **Reading for Enjoyment - Sixth Edition**

Four new or completely revised booklists in this popular and useful series. The (1-6 list is chosen by Tony Bradman; 7-11 by Vivien Griffiths; 12-15 by Fiona Waters; and 16+ by Alan Myers. Each annotated selection includes approximately 100 titles. £1.25 each (or £4.50 for a set of four) from Baker Books, Manfield Park, Guildford Road, Cranleigh, Surrey GU6 8NU.

### **SUMMER STORYBOAT**

The idea of a travelling narrow boat, packed with authors, books and stories, began with Hertfordshire Libraries. For several years the Storyboat made its way slowly along the canal between Watford and Tring during the first week of the school summer holidays, stopping to allow children and their families to clamber aboard and explore its treasures. The scheme was threatened when the County Library Service had to withdraw support but we are pleased to report that the Summer Storyboat project has survived and this year has been granted charitable status. It is funded by a combination of local and national concerns, including Kodak, BP, the Dickens and Robinson Group, local councils and, increasingly, by publishers who encourage their authors to take part.

From 27th-31st July this year the Summer Storyboat is off again with a series of day-long programmes of stories, songs, games, painting and competitions - all for free and designed to prove that books are fun. Details from Dina Thorpe, tel: Hatfield (07072) 66137.

## The Hobbit is 50

On 21st September 1987 it will be 50 years since **The Hobbit** by J. R. R. Tolkien was first published by George Allen and Unwin. Although well reviewed, **The Hobbit** was not an instant success, but gained popularity after **The Lord of the Rings** was published in 1954-5. It has since become a classic of English children's literature, translated into many languages.

Tolkien's publishers, now re-named Unwin Hyman after last year's merger, are celebrating with new editions of the hardback and paperback, and with newly jacketed editions of the sequel, **The Lord of the Rings** (written for adults but read by many children). There is also a free anniversary booklet written by Brian Alderson, available at good bookshops and particularly at branches of Blackwells, its publishers. A full-colour poster of Smaug the dragon destroying Lake Town, designed by John Howe, is available for £1.20 including p&p, from Unwin Hyman Ltd. Denmark House, 37/39 Queen Elizabeth Street, London SE1 2QB.

To tie in with the anniversary, BBC Radio is repeating its acclaimed serial of **The Lord of the Rings** starring Ian Holm as Frodo, in 13 parts on Sunday afternoons at 2.30. The adaptation is available as a boxed set of 13 cassettes for £31.50 including p&p from BBC Cassettes, Dept CB, Cirencester, Gloucestershire GL7 1RY.

The Tolkien Society, based in Britain, was founded in 1969, and aims to further interest in the life and works of Tolkien, and to combine scholarship with enthusiasm. There are many local groups around the country; some secondary school pupils have also formed Tolkien clubs or 'smials'. For the student and adult the Tolkien Society offers several national meetings a year, one in Oxford where Tolkien was Professor of English Language and Literature, and a regular series of bulletins for which members write articles and poetry, or produce artwork. Tolkien Society details available from the Secretary, 35 Amesbury Crescent, Hove, East Sussex BN3 5RD (SAE please).

**The Hobbit**, J.R.R. Tolkien, Unwin Hyman, 0 04 823386 2, £7.95 hbk; 0 04 823188 6, £2.50 pbk.

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