

## BOOK REVIEW

*The Good Book Guide to Children's Books* ed. Bing Taylor and Peter Braithwaite. Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1984. New ed. 78pp. £3-50.

With editorial advice by the well known critic Elaine Moss and drawings by the prize-winning illustrator Michael Foreman, I recommend this book to all who work with children and books.

There is a balanced selection of just over 600 titles, both fiction and non-fiction covering everything from picture books to teenage novels. Every book chosen is concisely and independently reviewed and photographed in colour. A great advantage is that 50% of the books selected are in paperback. Elaine Moss, the editorial adviser, is a specialist reviewer, which in itself is a guarantee of excellence. The delightful illustrations by the highly respected illustrator, Michael Foreman, add a charm which will delight children and adults alike. Sound advice is offered on the type of book best suited for every stage of a child's reading.

The book is divided into three parts with an introduction on how to use the guide. Part 1, 'Choosing Children's Books' is itself divided into four parts as follows: (i) Getting Started — 0-5 years (ii) Learning to Read — 4-8 years (iii) Young Fluent Readers — 7-11 years (iv) Growing Up — 11 years onwards. However, at what age group a child passes from one stage to the next is unimportant.

Part 2, 'The Books' consists of the selection of the 600 books of different types from established writers and new writers as well as the classics and old favourites. There are sections on nursery rhymes, picture books, bedtime stories, stories for beginners, stories for fluent readers, fairy and folk tales, poetry books, the modern 'greats', family, school and animal stories, science fiction, adventure and mystery stories, humorous stories, picture books for older children, books about nature, evolution, the human body, science and discovery, computers, the past, the world around us, the arts, religion, sports, hobbies and games, puzzles, jokes and quizzes and reference books.

Part 3, 'Buying Books' concerns itself with the importance of wise selection in the buying of books. It asks the question, 'Why buy books for children?', and it documents the cost of building a home library for children. It gives a home library checklist for the four stages of a child's reading life quoting types of books and the approximate cost. Finally it lists the bookshops in Great Britain that stock children's books and those that offer annotated book lists.

Although *The Good Book Guide to Children's Books* concentrates only on books from British publishers, the philosophy and advice contained in it applies to books published in all countries. It is a practical and well produced publication at a reasonable price, an invaluable and reliable guide not only to librarians and teachers of English but to parents hoping to turn their children into life-long readers by finding pleasure in books. What a great boon it would be for Australian children's librarianship and publishing if a similar publication could be produced in this country!

Useful additions to the content are the index listing titles, authors and illustrators and an introductory explanation on how to use the guide. The book will be available in Australia in September from Penguin Books Australia Ltd.

Ena Noël

President, Australian IBBY

(International Board on Books for Young People)

## ORANA — a report on Australia's only school and children's librarianship journal

LAST NOVEMBER, Val Watson, for twenty years honorary editor of *Orana*, wrote requesting support from School Libraries Section, New South Wales Branch, for Australia's only journal of School and Children's Librarianship.

The Section undertook to solicit articles and advertise *Orana* and its needs through their Newsletter and any other avenues available to them. Otherwise the Section had no clear idea what else was needed.

In February this year, the Section received a letter from their National President requesting an observer at General Council meeting of the previous November because agenda items concerned *Orana*. It was a little late but curiosity was aroused.

A committee member had already met with Val to clarify *Orana's* needs. Costs and lack of publicity and scarcity of copy from sources other than Val's personal contacts, were felt to be seriously diminishing the usefulness of the journal. However, the purport of the General Council meeting's agenda items on *Orana* could not be discovered or any outcome therefrom.

In April, *Orana's* second issue for 1984 appeared — good, despite Val's gloomy prognostications. Schools Section, with renewed zeal, publicised *Orana* at their seminars and were gratified by the warm response, especially from country librarians who had not known of it before. Further efforts for *Orana* were made through the committee's Catholic Schools' representative, NSW Library Services' *Notes and Miscellany*, the Section's *Newsletter*, and letters were sent to Schools and Children's Sections in other states requesting appointment of a liaison officer for *Orana* in the hope of eliciting a similar response from librarians elsewhere. There was but one answer — in June, from Children's Libraries Section, South Australia, for Sue Robinson to seek contributions. (More recently, Dr Anne Clyde, resigning from Schools Section Committee on transfer from Riverina CAE to head the Department of Library Stud-

ies at the WACAE, offered to act for *Orana* in that state.)

While Schools Section did what it could, it was also clear that much of *Orana's* difficulty was managerial. No editor, honorary or otherwise, can successfully fulfil all the functions such a publication requires and remain sane and healthy. Val was clearly not in good health and in dire need of effective practical assistance. Then *Orana's* business manager resigned.

At the request of the Executive Director in June, three members of Children's Section and four from Schools Section formed themselves into a temporary committee to sort out *Orana's* business affairs and give Val editorial and production assistance.

The business affairs are now virtually in order and future options can usefully be considered. The little publicity given in New South Wales has brought a gratifying response. Useful and stimulating copy remains a problem.

Do so few children's and schools' librarians around Australia do anything interesting, experimental or productive in their libraries? Does nothing ever happen there? Are librarians not interested in Children's Literature and its promotion? Have few anything of consequence to say to other librarians in Australia? Are most Children's and Schools' librarians so parochial?

It is hoped that discussion by the National Sections at the Annual General meeting in Brisbane in August will provide some answers, and that some permanent solution to the future of the only national literary journal of School and Children's Librarianship in Australia will, with co-operation and goodwill, be found.

Lois Carr

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South, Vic.: George Lugg Film Australian Film Institute, 1980. i

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## Guide to Australian Reference Books — Humanities

ISBN 0 86804 007 X

Library Association of Australia, Sydney, 1983

81 p

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Using the Dewey Decimal Classification System as a framework, Wilma Radford has produced a book that will be an invaluable tool to librarians, students, researchers, writers — in fact anyone who wants to find out what Australian books are available on ... architecture ... chess ... Judaism ... pottery ... theatre and dance ... photography ... philately ... etc, etc ...

Available now, through the LAA, 376 Jones Street, Ultimo NSW 2007, and also through Bennetts and Mannings.