

Who writes like?

Anyone who has worked in a public library will be familiar with the question 'who else writes like...?' There are a number of fiction guides available to assist librarians answer this question and this British publication is a handy addition.

It lists alphabetically 1058 novelists and suggests from 2 to 20 like minded authors for each. It also contains an alphabetical list-

ing of writers within each of 14 genres, a list of recent winners (since 1970) of 25 literary awards, and a descriptive bibliography of similar guides.

The book makes no attempt at critical judgement and gives no information beyond the authors name and genre and it suggests no titles. It is strictly a book of lists. As such, though, it should prove a boon to public librarians and fiction readers everywhere.

Inevitably some of the names linked together could be questioned, but for those on the periphery of 'likeness' inclusion seems a better policy than exclusion.

A number of Australian authors are listed, those one would expect such as Thomas Keneally, Patrick White and Peter Carey and others like Rodney Hall and David Malouf whose critical lauding has not been reflected in sales (or borrowings). Perhaps the most notable Australian omissions are Christina Stead (the stated contemporary focus could partly ex-

plain this), and Tim Winton (presumably his burgeoning popularity in Britain will see him included in the next edition).

The book was compiled by Roy Huse, who was asked 'who else writes like...?' uncountable times during his 46 years as a public librarian. It updates the 1985 publication *A readers guide to fiction* and concentrates predominantly on universally popular authors.

It is a simple but effective tool, highly recommended for all public libraries.

Huse, Roy, Ed and Comp. *Who else writes like...?: A readers guide to fiction authors*. Loughborough: Loughborough University of Technology, 1993. 256 pp. £16.95. ISBN 0 9488448 47 2. Available from LISU, Loughborough University of Technology, Loughborough, Leicestershire, LE11 3TU; Askews; T C Farries; Holt-Jackson; JMLS; and Morley Books.

Andrew McConville

Children's book catalogue

Joan Butler was head of Hertfordshire Children's service from 1948-1975. She catalogued a collection of discarded 'last copies' and a number of early children's books purchased by the library. The period covered by the collection, on view in Hatfield, is late 19th century to early 1960's.

This catalogue covers the years 1920-1944. The contents are categorised into sections such as fables, books of religious study, fiction, periodicals and annuals. Each section is in alphabetical order, by author. It is indexed by name and title. It is a small book, attractively presented, with an occasional black and white drawing. There are 1361 entries.

On browsing through one finds many childhood favourites to remember. However, reflecting the period, one title found was *Little wars: a game for boys from twelve years ... and for that more intelligent sort of girls who like boys' games and books*.

One of the annotations refers to *The marvellous land of Smergs* by Wyke Smith. We're told it was one of Tolkiens favourites and influenced his conception of the Hobbit. More of these annotations would improve the appeal of the catalogue.

The catalogue would be of interest to specialists in children's literature. Money from the sale of the catalogue will be used to improve arrangement of the collection.

The past is present: Catalogue of the Joan Butler collection of Children's books, 1920-1944 in the Hertfordshire Libraries Arts and Information Service. Hatfield: The Butler Family in conjunction with HLA, 1994 116pp ISBN 0-901354-76-7 (Review copy supplied by Hertfordshire County Council).

Kerry Doble

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