

# REAL BOOK NEWS

for adults helping children  
learn foreign languages

**REAL BOOK NEWS**

**ISSUE NUMBER 1**

May 1997

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## REAL BOOK NEWS

### What is it?

At the Council of Europe ECML Workshop No. 4/97 arranged by the Wydawnictwa Szkolne i Pedagogiczne (WSIP) at Debe, outside Warsaw, it was decided to set up a Network of people already using or interested in using REAL illustrated BOOKS as part of their programme in teaching a foreign language to children.

The REAL BOOKS Network aims are to publish a NEWSLETTER twice a year in May and in November. The NEWSLETTER (**REAL BOOK NEWS**) is not only for the 11 members of the NETWORK but for participants of the DEBE Workshop and others who are interested in using REAL BOOKS with children learning a foreign language.

### REAL BOOK NEWS

will include

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- lists of suitable and newly published Story Picture Books in 3 sections - English as well as French and German depending on the availability of material.
  - information on how to use REAL BOOKS based on experience
  - special ISSUES will feature information books, icon books and other special books

It is hoped that

### REAL BOOK NEWS

will be used as a resource of information for

- teachers
- teacher trainers
- parents

***Editorial***

It was great to get such a response from the 51 participants from 21 countries at the Debe Workshop to my sessions on using REAL BOOKS. I hadn't realised how much REAL BOOKS had become part of the Workshop until we were lost on our way to the splendid Belvedere Palace in Warsaw. As we walked back and forth around the walls that separated us from the Palace and our dinner people said to me:

*'We're going on a dinner hunt.*

*We're going to have a good one*

*What a beautiful evening*

*We're not scared!*

Pointing to the barrier, they continued copying the actions I had used in my presentation of **We're Going on a Bear Hunt (Walker ISBN 0-7445-2323-0)**

*We can't go over it.*

*We can't go under it*

*Oh no! We've got to go through it!*

Fortunately for us, we didn't have to go through it, as eventually we found a gate that was open and, like many good stories, all ended well! We had a delicious dinner in memorable surroundings. Thank you WSIP.

If, after a quick presentation, we adults can pick up the phrases of a rhyming story, what can children achieve as most of them have language acquisition skills which many adults, with age, find more difficult to use effectively.

'Not now Bernard' (**ISBN 0-09-972541-X**) became another favourite. Quite often I heard people say jokingly 'Not now Bernard'. Since the **Mini Treasure RED FOX** edition of **Not now Bernard** costs under £1, I hope that many schools will be able to afford it and 'Not now Bernard' will become a much used phrase in their English classrooms, too!

Debe was fun and we have many different souvenirs of our time together. I hope to meet some of you again at the International Conference in Hanover on May 22 when I will be giving a session on REAL BOOKS introducing some different ones from at Debe.

In the mean time, thanks to help from DEBE Networkers, ISSUE 1 of **REAL BOOK NEWS** includes information on books to use with children learning French, German and English. We hope that you will find **REAL BOOK NEWS** helpful.

Please let us know if you have any suggestions or books you love and would like to recommend to us.

## **POEMS for the VERY YOUNG (Kingfisher 1ISBN 0-7534-0022-7)**

Do you remember

*If you ever ever ever ever ever  
If you ever ever ever meet a whale*

or

*A man said to me,  
'Can you sing?  
I said, 'Sing?'  
He said, 'Yes.'*

These rhymes were different from the traditional Nursery Rhymes and, apart from being fun, they introduced useful language for transfer to use in other situations.

I have recently found that Michael Rosen, who selected the rhymes, has recorded most of the rhymes on audio cassette. The cassette is obtainable from bookshops. Please order

**POEMS for the VERY YOUNG selected and read by Michael Rosen  
30 mins CAT ASH 4 BNR or from  
Books for Children PO Box 413 Uxbridge Middlesex UB 11 1 DX**

For those of you wanting cassettes to go with books, you may find Bags of Books run by Angela Macpherson a useful source. Please send for her catalogue or ask the British Council if they have a copy of the catalogue they could show you.

Opal Dunn

For those of you wanting to increase the number of **AUDIO-BOOKS** in your school please Fax or write for a copy of

**BAGS of BOOKS** catalogue.

There is no need for customers outside Britain to send any payment for the catalogue.

# BEYOND EUROPE

## to other ENGLISH SPEAKING COUNTRIES

Why not enjoy some of the same books as children in **Australia** or **New Zealand**? Picture Puffin are now selling in Britain books originally published in Australia, written and illustrated by **Pamela Allen**.

Pamela, a New Zealander by birth, now lives and works in Sydney, Australia. She has won many outstanding prizes in both Australia and New Zealand and has over 15 books published by Picture Puffins.

I suggest that you begin by:

### **Bertie and the Bear**

**Picture Puffins ISBN 0-14-050972-0**

Because Bertie is chased by a Bear all sorts of people chase after him, one by one, each making a very loud and amusing noise on the instrument they play.

*'The Queen shouted,  
'Shoo, shooo you monster YOU!'  
and chased the bear.*

*The King took his trumpet  
and blew it, BLAH! BLAH!  
And chased after the Queen.*

*The Admiral grabbed a gong  
and hit it, BONG BONG-NG-NG  
and chased after the King.'*

And so on and on to the climax.

It is an easy story to understand as the illustrations complement the text. Children soon pick up the language and join in. It is great fun and the result can be quite noisy, but it is good for letting out frustrations!

An example of TEACHING NOTES shows how I found it best to present **BERTIE**. Please note that the PRE-INTRODUCTION took place during 5 lessons before I actually read the first part of the story and showed the pictures. This lengthy PRE\_INTRODUCTION was worth while as when the children followed the story in the book they found out that they were already familiar with a lot of the language so they easily understood the story and loved the pictures.

Since there was not much language and most of it was rhyming, they soon knew the story off by heart and went on to reading the story from memory. This 'Memory reading' is a vital step on the way to real reading.

After **Bertie and the Bear** try Pamela Allen's

**Mr McGee**

**Picture Puffins ISBN 0-14-050969-0**

Mr McGee lived under a tree and the pictures and rhyming text take you on his amusing adventures. The text is simple and includes useful language for Young Learners. The stylised illustrations support the text making understanding easier and adding elements of fun. You'll all enjoy Mr McGee, I feel sure.

You may find it better to present the book Mr McGee in two steps, but before looking at the book with your children, bring an apple, preferably a **bright red apple**, into the classroom and talk about apple trees and how **apples** grow on **branches** and fall onto the **ground**. Then **peel** the apple **carefully** in one piece, going round and round, so that you have one long **wiggly skin**. (Page 14) A session like this which takes only a few minutes, might lead to all sorts of ideas from the children. The way fruit, including apples, are peeled often differs from culture to culture, so your children might be unfamiliar with this way of peeling apples. It's the way my grandmother always peeled apples. She made a sort of game out of it; could she do it in one long piece or would it break on the way?

Lesson 1 introducing Mr McGee ( up to Page 15)

***Mr McGee lived under a tree.  
One morning he woke up and said,  
'It's time that I got out of bed.'***

He then gets dressed. The amusing illustrations support the text which make understanding easy.

***'I'm ready for anything now,' sang he.  
I'm brave and I'm clever, I'M MR McGEE.'  
Then Mr McGee looked down and found,  
a bright red apple on the ground,***

Lesson 2 tells the rest of the story (Page 16 to the end)

It's a fun story and something children can easily dramatise using a chorus to speak the main text and giving speaking parts to the people and animals in the text and extending it to those in the illustrations. Mr McGee, the man, is so easy to copy that children made Mr McGee story-drawings inventing their own stories. Others made their own finger puppets out of card.

After **Mr McGee** please take your children on to Pamela Allen's

**Mr McGee Goes to Sea ISBN 0-14-054403-8**

but before you do you'll have to introduce them to a typically British-style teapot! There are more in the series but these are the two I would recommend, at least to start off.