



BfK News ? March 1983

By *admin*

Created *Oct '09*

[19](#) [1]

Article Category:

BfK Briefing

Byline:

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

Tintin's Creator

<!--break-->

Georges Remi, better known as Hergé, who died early in March aged 75 was the creator of Tintin. On the continent where they regard the art form of the 'picture strip' more seriously than we in this country (at least so far) his work has the status of classics.

The character of the bright and resourceful young reporter with his distinctive ginger quiff and faithful dog first appeared in 1929. The strip soon became an international success and Tintin appeared in editions all over the world. Georges Remi, a Belgian, who was born and died in his beloved Brussels, took his characters from all over Europe. The English contributed most notably that marvellous stereotype Captain (Blistering Barnacles) Haddock.

Hergé was a perfectionist and to ensure authenticity in every detail he researched the books extensively. Later this year Methuen, Hergé's English publisher, will issue **The Making of Tintin** (0 416 29300 X, £6.95) the unabridged stories **The Secret of the Unicorn** and **Red Rackham's Treasure**, plus an illustrated section on the background research which shows how the stories took shape. A previously untranslated adventure, **The Blue Lotus** (0 416 44460 1, £3.50) is also due in the summer. (The most recently published adventure was **Tintin and the Picaros** in 1976). These were planned to mark the 25th anniversary of the first English translation of Tintin. Sadly they will now also stand as tributes to an artist whose work will surely endure and be enjoyed and appreciated by children (and adults) for many years to come.

Watch out for Walker

The end of May sees the launch of Walker Books, previously published under the joint Methuen-Walker imprint. The first Walker Books catalogue looks interesting. It is particularly strong on titles for toddlers and infants, with names like Helen Oxenbury, John Burningham and Russell Hoban offering series.

Bologna Prize

Each year at the famous Bologna Children's Book Fair, an international jury awards a graphic prize. This year (the 20th) it was won by Gollancz for Roy Gerrard's **The Favershams**.

Bestsellers of 1982

The Centre for Children's Books is the source of data showing the books with the highest sales (from High Street bookshops) during 1982. They are:

1. **The Twits** Roald Dahl (Puffin 95p)
2. **The Ha Ha Bonk Book** Janet and Alan Ahlberg (Puffin 85p)
3. **HRH The Princess of Wales** Brenda Ralph Lewis (Ladybird 50p)
4. **Robot** Jan Pienkowski (Heinemann £5.95)
5. **Revolting Rhymes** Roald Dahl (Jonathan Cape £3.95)
6. **You Can Do the Cube** Patrick Bossert (Puffin 80p)
7. **The Secret of Nimh** Robert C. O'Brien (Puffin £1.10)
8. **Asterix and the Black Gold** Goscinny & Uderzo (Hodder & Stoughton £2.50)
9. **Up with Skool!** compiled by children (Puffin 80p)
10. **Spot's First Walk** Eric Hill (Heinemann £3.95)

Any surprises? We would be interested to see any school top ten lists. If you keep a note of your bestsellers, send it to the News Page and we'll publish a School Bookshop Favourite Books list from time to time.

Going Wild with' Glyndebourne

After his success with the designs for **The Love of Three Oranges** at Glyndebourne last year **Maurice Sendak** is back working with the Glyndebourne Festival Company on an opera version of **Where the Wild Things Are** with music by Oliver Knussen. The show will open at the National Theatre in London on December 31st. It will be followed later in 1984 by another opera based on **Higglety, Pigglety, Pop**. Both productions will be televised by the BBC.

Evans Move Out

Evans Brothers Ltd. has sold its UK publishing list: educational, adult and children's titles, including Pepper Press, and its English Language teaching titles, to Bell and Hyman. For information contact Elizabeth Sitch, Denmark House, 37-39 Queen Elizabeth Street. London SE1. 01 407 0709.

The Future of Children's Books

There has been a decline in sales of children's books over the past few years. Fewer children, educational cutbacks, The Recession, Video: possible reasons abound. Could it be even that there is something wrong with the product? To try to make some sense out of all this 160 publishers, booksellers, teachers and librarians met in February to discuss the

question 'Are we really facing a dwindling market?'

A panel of speakers to get things going was drawn from all groups connected with children's books. Naturally much that was said concerned children and schools and we report a brief synopsis of some of it here.

Vicki Lee (Deputy Head of Steeple Bumpstead school, Suffolk) referred to the widespread lowering of morale among teachers at present and urged publishers and booksellers to give them the fullest support by helping to stimulate an interest in books generally among the public and more directly among children in school. More children could be brought into contact with books if booksellers supported school bookshops, went into schools on a regular basis organised special evening events and generally didn't just wait for their customers to walk into their shops.

She was also concerned about the poor quality of many non-fiction titles which do not 'back-up' learning, are frequently badly designed and often contain inaccuracies. Vivien Griffiths (Head of Services to Young People, Birmingham Central Library) was also concerned about books, particularly the lack of exciting, original stories and the over supply of too- sophisticated imported picture books. Booksellers should pay more attention to 'quality' children's books.

Ron Ulyat from W. H. Smith said that he had no obligation to sell these 'quality' books when Enid Blyton was obviously what children wanted to read. Better to read Blyton than nothing at all. 'The future of all publishing and bookselling, not just children's is in paperbacks and real care should be given to this part of the market' he added.

The consensus was that steps could be taken to ensure a successful future: children's books should be treated as seriously as their adult rivals for publishers' resources, especially publicity; teachers need support, help and better information; schools need better non-fiction and more titles in under-published areas: booksellers should make books easier to find in their shops, and actively go out and find business, especially in schools.

The Children's Book Circle and the Children's Bookselling Group of the Booksellers' Association who organised the conference are sending out a questionnaire and will produce a report. They hope that that, plus the points brought out in the conference, will help to produce what everyone wants - fewer, better, more popular books and satisfied, literate enthusiastic children.

What do Books for Keeps readers think of all this? Write and tell us what your views are on the dwindling market.

Page Number:

28

Source URL (retrieved on Mar '21): <http://ww.booksforkeeps.co.uk/issue/19/childrens-books/articles/bfk-briefing/bfk-news-%E2%80%93-march-1983>

Links:

[1] <http://ww.booksforkeeps.co.uk/issue/19>