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I don't dislike Southall - **Over the Top** has a certain distinction, ditto the second half of **The Fox Hole** - but the constant squandering of Magnet books' potential is very distressing. Why were these dredged up from '67 and '72 (to get a 'major name'? because of overseas considerations?) when throughout the seventies, Southall's work has failed to impress many British kids? **The Fox Hole** is about a boy trapped in an old mine shaft whose rescuer, an uncle, is temporarily deranged by greed when Ken sees gold in the pit. Even in literary terms, it is flawed: slow to start, less-than-convincing characters. **Over the Top** is better - but there's some late-Southall style which'll make it tough for the 11-13 audience it shares with the earlier book. It's 2 a.m.; Perry's pregnant Mum is off to hospital. Then Dad brains himself, Mum bogs the car in mud and Perry must brave the storm to get help from an angry neighbour. A nice mixture of tension and humour although parts don't ring true. I wouldn't stake my life on these two going down well - I'd even be hesitant about risking 85p.

Running Order:

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