Criticism, Pedagogy, Practice and Facilitation
in
Children's Literature, Drama and Oral Storytelling

Geoff Fox

A submission presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the University of Glamorgan/Prifysgol Morgannwg for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

September 2004
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Contents</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abstract</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overview</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Teaching of Literature in Schools</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Criticism of Literature written for Children</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drama and Storytelling</td>
<td>175</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Editorial Work</td>
<td>207</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix One: Letters from collaborating authors</td>
<td>208</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix Two: Reviews</td>
<td>213</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Abstract

This submission for a PhD by Publication draws upon the writings of Geoff Fox over a period of more than 30 years. Fox worked initially as a secondary school teacher, including a formative period in the United States in the late 1960s. Although based at the Exeter University School of Education from 1970 until his retirement in 2000, he also worked extensively as an invited conference speaker, researcher, workshop leader, oral storyteller and drama director in the United Kingdom and abroad. His experience informs much of his writing.

He published regularly throughout his time at Exeter on several aspects of his field. A common element underpinning his writing is his interest in literature for children, whether in the form of novels, poetry, drama or oral stories. A characteristic of the work in this submission is that the responses of children to these literary forms is invariably taken into account.

For this submission, four inter-related areas of work are selected to represent his list of publications:

- the teaching of literature in schools;
- the criticism of literature written for children;
- drama and storytelling;
- editorial work.

The collection includes whole books, chapters from books, journal articles and some sample copies of the journal *Children's Literature in Education*, which Fox has edited for 34 years.

An Overview introduces the collection, placing each submitted piece in relation to the writer's career and developing interests. Research which preceded writing is indicated and there is some consideration of the work in terms of its originality and its impact upon both academic and pedagogical fields. There is particular mention of two areas; Fox's influence nationally and internationally in the teaching of literature based upon reader-response theory; and his work as editor of a respected international refereed journal in the field of study.

A selection of contemporary reviews completes the submission.
Overview

Introduction

In the summer of 1956, I left Manchester Grammar School for National Service in the Royal Air Force. Five years later, two weeks before I sat Finals at Oxford, I returned to the school to interview for a teaching post. I probably got the job more for my expertise on the lacrosse field than in the field of literature. The interviewer was W. Heppell Mason, the Head of English, who had taught me in the sixth form. After two or three years on the staff, I happened to find the school office deserted one afternoon and took a surreptitious look in the files at his notes on Fox as a school-leaver: 'His achievements were a triumph of personality over intellectual ability.'

It was not until the autumn of 1966, when I went as an exchange teacher to Newton High School, Massachusetts, that I began to develop the approach to literature and the teaching of literature which has informed my professional life, including the writings which I have submitted for the doctorate by publication. When I left for America, I already had two books in press: Starting-Points (Hodder and Stoughton, 1967), a course book offering a range of ways into imaginative writing for 11-13 year olds; and a discussion of The Winter's Tale (1967), in a series of slim volumes published by Basil Blackwell. Looking back, I am embarrassed by the sheer cheek of publishing anything at all on the strength of a few years at MGS. However, Starting-Points did well for some 25 years and was eventually killed off only by the constraints of the National Curriculum. My Winter's Tale, a work innocent of originality, failed to make a lasting impact upon Shakespeare scholarship.

I suppose I wrote in part because almost all of us in the English Department were writing and publishing, often with Hodders. My old sixth form teacher had retired; the rest of us were of an age and, in our zeal and our arrogance, thought that the startling work consistently produced by our pupils was a consequence of our teaching. In truth, most of the boys (in the top 2% if intelligence tests were any measure), needed only opportunity rather than guidance or stimulation. Nevertheless, the realisation that it was possible to write and get published was helpful. Without that early experience, I might not be submitting the present body of work.
I also directed three Junior School plays at MGS. The cast list of one of them included the current directors of the National Theatre and Glyndebourne, Nick Hytner and Stephen Pimlott. Robert Powell (a youthful yet cadaverous Lear) and Michael White (a Hamlet already exuding the glamour which has made him so popular as a television historian) were in the Senior Dramatic Society; but at audition Ben Kingsley was told by a colleague that he lacked experience and had better stick to medicine. Such actors, like our writers, may not have needed much help, but at least I developed my enthusiasm for drama, which was to become an absorbing element of my professional life. Again, that interest is reflected in my submission for the degree.

But it was the students and colleagues at Newton High who stopped me in my tracks and then set me off on a different trail. Wisely, the authorities at the school time-tabled their young exchange teacher for two Curriculum 1A and two Curriculum 2A English classes - all in the Junior (penultimate) year. My students were all able or at least 'average'. Nevertheless, as in any comprehensive school, even in a leafy, affluent suburb of Boston with its galleries, its Symphony, its politics and history, its fifteen or more universities including Harvard, Radcliffe and MIT, these students needed teaching. By good fortune, I was assigned to Beals House, which I soon realised included the most innovative and committed English teachers in the school.

As I became more at home, I found opportunity to work with a colleague who taught the notorious 'Tech High boys' - trainee plumbers, construction workers or car mechanics. I'd never met students like these. They burst into the relatively academic surroundings of our department, masking their unease with the swagger of so many rebels without a cause. My friend Barry started off the year with three hour-long lessons in which he sat without saying a word in the circle of study-chairs while the Tech High lads shouted and postured about the room; 'Come on, Teach, whenya gonna teach us?' Finally, consumed by frustration and curiosity, the leaders of the different factions imposed a kind of quiet upon the rest for a couple of minutes. Barry broke his silence: 'Oh-kay,' he drawled, 'I guess I'll call the register now.' They became intensely loyal to him, not least because he played very physical basketball with them one out of four lessons each week until a nervous Administration put a stop to such eccentricity. One day when the school closed for snow, some of the boys trudged three miles round to his home to work on stories they were writing. Later in
the year, when I read Graham Greene's *The Destructors* to them over an hour and a half, I knew I had never had such attentive listeners.

We worked in exciting times: Vietnam and Civil Rights; Pete Seeger singing to seven thousand of us on the Fenway through a scented haze (strange smelling cigarettes, I thought); Stokely Carmichael ablaze at a huge rally downtown ('If you're white, Go Home'). Significantly, these were post-Sputnik as well as post-Kennedy days in which Washington was pumping money into education, determined not to fall behind in the international stakes. It was a time demanding change.

We tried out anything and everything in our classrooms, occasionally because instinct suggested this was the way to go, but usually with a kind of pragmatic underpinning theory. We were influenced by the Encounter Group movement, by writers like John Holt, Jonathan Kozol and Carl Rogers - but most of all, by each other. We would get together in someone's home in the evening to keep the day's dialogues going. The Newton School Superintendent, Chuck Brown, was a remarkable educational leader who went on to head the Ford Foundation. To the alarm of all the administrators inbetween, he invited a dozen of us grass roots teachers out to dinner in a fancy restaurant and then to meet in his own home every Monday evening to talk teaching and see where it took us. From those meetings grew an offshoot school (still within the public system) where teachers and students negotiated the curriculum together. The Murray Road School ran for 20 years and closed only when the School Board believed the mainstream high schools had learned all they could from it.

At the end of the school year (through one of those fortunate chances that change a career - someone missed a dental appointment and one thing led to another...), I was invited to work in the prestigious six-week Harvard-Newton summer school. Here, prior to their year's course beginning in September, the incoming group of students (equivalent to British PGCEs) worked each morning with 'live' children in a Junior High School. My task as a Master Teacher was to support six of these excitingly able, but anxious, student-teachers through their first encounters with children in classrooms. They were used to success on their degree courses, but now they were in situations each day where that kind of measurable success was not the issue. Every lesson was exposed to a rigorous cycle of 'Preparation/Teaching/Analysis' throughout the six week programme. When we'd finished the morning's classes in school and talked through the next day, we all drove...
into Cambridge for lectures from internationally renowned educators such as Jerome Kagan and Edgar Friedenburg. The student teachers might be drained, but many turned up for optional drama workshops I ran at the School of Education in the evenings. I am still in touch with some of them, now in their fifties; one is a well-known children's author, another a filmscript writer who, as a drama teacher, 'discovered' Matt Damon and Ben Affleck, another an Education Professor and a fourth - yes - a high school teacher. At other times, fellow Master Teachers recruited by Harvard from all over the States would meet out of hours to talk teaching. I loved the work and soon wondered whether this was what I wanted to do with my career; the ladder towards headships which most of us at MGS thought was our future seemed much less attractive. Harvard flew me back from the UK to teach for them for the next five years, the last two as Chair of the English Department.

In all this work in Newton and at Harvard, the focus was upon what the pupils learned set alongside what the teacher intended to teach. The match/mismatch between the responses of the pupil and the purposes of the teacher was of intense interest. It is easy to look back with a smile at those heady days in the late sixties and early seventies; yet the smile is partly wistful in a present when teaching is so influenced by a curriculum leaving little room for the idiosyncratic needs of a pupil or the invention of a teacher. The current emphasis could not be more clearly demonstrated than by government requirements that student teachers tick dozens of competence boxes; there are no boxes entitled 'reflection' or 'initiative'. Such teachers are hardly likely to see themselves as agents of change in schools.

I provide this context because I see it as significant in shaping my published work, as well as my teaching which, since 1970, has been in the School of Education, Exeter University. The American experience left me with a taste for the challenge and stimulus of overseas work, so that although Exeter offered a consistently satisfying base, always in the company of good colleagues, I have been glad to be invited to work abroad as a visiting professor/speaker/workshop leader/researcher on some 40 occasions. My destinations have varied from universities in the States, Canada, western Europe and Australia to a variety of venues in Poland, the Czech Republic and Slovakia; from the elegant halls of Dartmouth College in New Hampshire to bleak corridors reeking of boiled cabbage in Ulaan Baator; and from schools on Native Canadian reserves in the north to others approachable only by small boat in southern Brazil.
I have been remarkably fortunate in the mix of contacts these travels have provided. Often, I have shared the journeys and the teaching with a partner, chief among them Paddy Creber, Michael Benton and Stephen Cockett. My preference for collaborative work is evident in some of the texts I have submitted for the degree. Colleagues I have met in other countries have been generous in sharing expertise and ideas. The academic links have usually been in the study and teaching of literature for young readers, oral storytelling and the use of drama in the learning of English as a second language.

In 1970, soon after arriving at Exeter, and thanks once more to a fortunate chance, I found myself on the founding editorial board of a journal, *Children's Literature in Education*. The journal has proved to be one of the most important elements in my career, and I still serve as its editor. Many of the contacts made on my travels have been sustained through publication and correspondence relating to the journal.

From the range of interests indicated above, developed over a working lifetime, a pattern of four major fields of publication emerges. This pattern provides the structure for my submission and thus for the remainder of this Overview essay:

1. the teaching of literature in schools;
2. the criticism of literature written for children;
3. drama and oral narratives;
4. editorial work in relation to 1, 2 and 3.

I begin each section with a list of the texts submitted. Appendix 1 at the end of the submissions contains the required letters from my collaborators confirming that I have been responsible for 50% of the work involved. Appendix 2 includes a brief selection of reviews of some of the work submitted, as recommended by the Glamorgan guidelines.

The Teaching of Literature in Schools

1. 'Reading Fiction - starting where the kids are', chapter in *Reluctant to Read?* (edited by John L Foster). London: Ward Lock Educational, 1977
2. 'Dark Watchers; Young readers and their fiction': journal article, *English in Education*, Sheffield: NATE, 1979
In the late seventies, I began a series of studies employing my PGCE English Group at the School of Education as one-to-one interviewers of young readers. The series ran for four years, each study involving between 100 and 120 pupils in the first three years of secondary schools. I no longer have the box-files of evidence from this research for the truth is that, in those innocent days before the Research Assessment Exercise, I conducted the studies simply because I wanted to find something out. I wanted to know more about what happened inside the heads of young readers when they read fiction - since I could not see how you could teach in any theorised way without such insight. When I began, I could find no evidence of published work in this area. I had been interested by Frank Whitehead's Schools Council project reported in *Children and their books* (1977), which was strong on what was read but not on what children made of what they were reading. With my friend Michael Benton (a teaching colleague at MGS and by then a lecturer at Southampton University), I had run several workshop exercises in which adult participants jotted down what had been in their minds' eyes as they listened to the same extract from a story. I had been excited by the unpredictable diversity of responses. Given the implications the readers' responses might have for the teaching of literature, I also wanted my PGCEs to be as intrigued as I was by what was to be discovered. Building the student teachers into the study as interviewers during their teaching practices was the best way I could devise to achieve this end.

So much teaching, especially for exams at that time, implied that there was only one, 'right' response - that of the teacher or examiner. In the early 1960s, at the request of my old Oxford tutor, I had served for three years as an examiner of O-levels for the Oxford and Cambridge Board. At our examiners' marks standardisation meeting, the 'right' response was that of the Chief Examiner, an irascible retired professor of English Literature from London University. When, as a young examiner and a classroom teacher at that, I dared to suggest not one but
several feasible answers to some of his questions, he rose upon trembling legs to
dismiss my offerings as 'merely otiose'. After three years, I gave up public examining in despair.

My own twelve year old daughter neatly summarised my frustration when she came home from an English lesson in which she had been filling in a worksheet on Bill Naughton's much-used short story, 'Spit Nolan'. She was a biddable student, but over tea she complained, 'I did write down six reasons why I thought Spit was a hero, but I didn't mean it. I thought he was a fool.' She became, inevitably, a teacher, albeit one constantly at odds with the structures in which she works.

The physical records of those research studies were binned in one of the necessary periodic clear-outs of my overflowing university office. I had no thought of publishing them at the time and I certainly had no thought of needing them one day for an Overview essay; but they inform the first three entries in my list in this section, where they provide several of the illustrations to my discussions. Initially in my list of open-ended questions, I used (through my PGCE interviewing team) what has since become a familiar approach - the 'Desert Island Books' strategy. Pupils came up with wonderfully varied lists of five books to be marooned with; three Enid Blyton Kirrin Island epics were joined by Dostoevsky's *The Idiot* and Pirsig's *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance* on the list of a second year girl in a rural Dorset Comprehensive. When she chose her favourite passage in response to another question, she talked about the son riding pillion behind his father in Pirsig's book. The boy scorns his father's pleasure in a flock of red-winged blackbirds which rise from a nearby field. The girl told her puzzled interviewer that in it she saw her own relationship with her parents - she had eloped the previous year with a boy from her class and had been missing for several days. When she came back, she found her parents over-keen to placate her; the power in the family dynamics had shifted to her - and she regretted that. I also became interested in what pupils 'saw' when they read and, in a later study, tried to explore this area by asking them to listen to a passage read aloud and then to jot down what was in their minds' eyes. We also focussed on favourite characters and asked readers to say what they'd look like if they came through the door *now* - with results which are mentioned in the chapter in John Foster's book.

A further study, this time a questionnaire answered by 1000 school students in South West England (administered again by my PGCEs on teaching practice)
concentrated on poetry. Among other findings, we learned that when they were asked to place five classroom activities (for example, 'writing stories', 'doing grammar') in order of preference, 'reading poetry' was placed last by c.500 pupils and first by two. 'Why?' was clearly an important question. If we knew little of what went on inside the heads of novel readers, we seemed to know even less about readers of poems. Just how did they read poems - what were their processes? What were the implications for the ways in which poetry was currently being taught - and the ways in which it might be taught?

My first two submissions in this study, Reading Fiction - starting where the kids are and Dark Watchers: young readers and their fiction, arose directly out of this series of studies. I know they have faults. The first even has some evidence of the chauvinism of its 1970s author. 'Dark Watchers', a phrase I still value for its imaginative precision, was offered by a fourteen year-old girl in a secondary modern school, describing herself reading The Lord of the Rings; 'Claire' gave me the title for an article still quoted by later writers on reader response; for example, Michael Benton's Studies in the Spectator role; literature, painting and pedagogy (2000) and Charles Sarland's chapter in Peter Hunt's Understanding Children's Literature (1999). These articles were the origins of work which culminated in Teaching Literature 9-14, my third submission in this section, which is perhaps my most influential publication.

The collection of individual readers' responses in schools had broken some new ground in the United Kingdom. Library searches and Inter Library Loans (the cumbersome precursors of the net) had produced some American work in the area, usually in the field of bibliotherapy. I found these references with the help of the late David Evans, a particularly amusing and provocative older colleague, an educational psychologist, in the School of Education. With him, I taught several children's literature courses for PGCEs and MAs in the late 1970s and early 1980s.

I was also becoming interested in a particular strategy we had used in the studies. Rather than ask a question and record a spoken answer, my interviewers were instructed to invite their young readers to jot notes for a few moments before replying. The intention was to help them to find out what they thought before they replied - the principle of 'How do I know what I think until I see what I've jotted?' It also gave the young readers the authority in the exchange - they were the experts, not the adult interviewer. I became fascinated by this 'space' for response and what,
given trust and genuine interest, might fill it. Time after time, children said
something to the effect of 'I've never talked like this about books before.' Jotting
became, and remained, a frequent element in my own teaching when reading prose,
poetry and picture books, whether the text was Dickens or Shakespeare, E Annie
Proulx or Carol Ann Duffy, Melvin Burgess or Maurice Sendak.

Two short articles, not included in my submission, should be mentioned here.
Twenty Four Things to do with a book arose from a three-week residential summer
school for practising teachers which I taught at the University of British Columbia,
Vancouver in 1976. The piece first appeared in Children's Literature in Education in
1977 and was subsequently reprinted in Anthony Adams's New Directions in English
Teaching (1983). Thirty Six Things to do with a poem (co-authored with Brian
Merrick) derived from a group at a NATE conference at Warwick University in
1980. It appeared first in The Times Educational Supplement, then Children's
Literature in Education, the Anthony Adams collection, an Open University reader
(Children, Language and Literature, edited by Neil Mercer) and in another Open
University text, English Literature in Schools (ed. V.J. Lee). Subsequently, as I used
to discover on my travels, both pieces made countless appearances on photocopying
machines and even, without permission, in books around the world. if I have a
reputation among classroom teachers, it probably originated with these two articles.
They were soundly theorised, thoroughly classroom-tested - and extremely short.
Hard-pressed teachers and students knew a handy check-list when they saw one.

They proved influential in another sense, however, for it was through the
popularity of these articles that I was asked by Mary Worrall, then a senior editor at
Oxford University Press, to write a book for teachers about teaching literature. This
was the origin of Teaching Literature 9-14 (1985) written in collaboration with
Michael Benton. Michael and I had taught together at Manchester GS and
subsequently led several residential workshops for teachers at Exeter and
Southampton and for sixth formers in Lancashire. He had been working on his PhD
based upon children's responses to a story he had written himself. He was stronger on
poetry than I (he was joint editor with his brother of the successful Touchstones
series) whilst I knew more about fiction for children and picture books. For him,
editing and revising were difficult chores (much of his editing happens in his head
before pen is put to paper); whereas I tend to hurl words at the blank page and then
enjoy the process of drafting and redrafting.
Teaching Literature 9-14 was republished 6 times and sold some 17,000 copies. As a consequence of this book, Michael and I were invited together or separately to a number of international seminars or conferences. For example, I visited Tasmania in 1992 to talk to 800 members of the Australian Reading Association and the Australian Association for the Teaching of English largely on the back of this book. I think it is fair to claim that it was the first book for teachers which offered a coherent, theorised basis for a response-focussed style of teaching literature, worked through into the practicalities of the daily classroom. In part, our own separate studies underpinned the book, but I also gained much from certain scholars. Tolkien's notion of the secondary world was fundamental to much of our thinking. Wolfgang Iser's The Implied Reader and The Act of Reading clarified my understanding of 'telling gaps' left by authors, a writer's sense of audience and the active space between authors and readers in which a text is realised. Norman Holland's classic research 5 Readers Reading confirmed notions about the idiosyncratic responses to the same words on the page and reinforced the kind of methods I had devised in my own studies and teaching. The American scholars Louise Rosenblatt, pioneer of response studies, James Squire, Simon Lesser and Walter Slatoff were other shaping influences.

What Michael and I were doing was paying attention to what has now become a commonplace notion - what readers bring to the text. The book was generously reviewed (see Appendix 2) and frequently quoted in subsequent work. V J Lee's English Literature in Schools reprinted all of Chapter 2 and The Times Educational Supplement printed a lengthy extract from Chapter 3 in advance of publication. Roger Samways, one of the committee led by Professor Brian Cox, (charged with preparing the first version of the National Curriculum for English in England and Wales) told us that our book was often consulted in their deliberations. When the Cox Report appeared, (in two parts, 1988 and 1989), Teaching Literature 9-14 was the only text to which specific reference was made. The Cox Committee's view of teaching English did not wholly prevail once the politicians, Sheila Lawlor and Daniel Marenbom, with a clear-sightedness born of a total ignorance of the state school system, got stuck into the report. Idiosyncratic responses to literature required individual marking, and that meant time and informed thought. For Lawlor and Marenbom and their masters, these were not fashionable commodities.
Reading Picture Books ...How To? (a chapter in Voices Off) was originally a keynote address delivered at a conference held at Homerton College, Cambridge in 1995. It reflects the fact that my interest in reading processes had extended beyond prose and poetry into picture books, arguably the most innovative and exciting form of children's literature in the last two decades of the century. I based the chapter on practical discussions and exercises with students on a Year 2 undergraduate children's literature course and a small-scale study with a dozen nine year olds. Drawing on the work of other scholars (as the chapter mentions) and, in my original lecture, using colour slides (some of which are reproduced as black-and-white illustrations in the text), I attempted to summarise eight areas of activity in which the 'reader' of picture books might engage. At this time, I do not think anyone had tried to link the varied activities of picture book readers; Jane Doonan's invaluable work concentrated on words and image, whereas mine attempted to link words, image and children. My further purpose was to compare these activities with those of the reader of a poem. This too, I believe, was an original line of thought. To my mind, the two processes were very similar and the implications for enhancing the advanced reading abilities of young, teenage and even undergraduate readers were numerous. I concluded this chapter with a case study, based on the work of a student with whom I had collaborated closely on teaching practice.

The final submission in this section was written in response to an invitation by Professor Peter Hunt to contribute to his Encyclopaedia of Children's Literature (1997). My work at conferences and in such publications as Teaching Literature 9-14 prompted him to ask me to write a chapter about 'Teaching Fiction and Poetry'. The chapter required some research into the history of the teaching of literature in the United Kingdom, enabling me to contrast the recommendations of reports from the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries with the constraints imposed by governments in our own time. Against this historical contrast, the chapter then surveyed contemporary teaching of literature with sub-sections on oral storytelling and classroom work with picture books, fiction and poetry.

I include the encyclopaedia chapter in part because I think it reflects the way in which, throughout the nineties, I attempted to engage in the national and indeed international debate about literacy. My involvement was perhaps more direct, given the speed with which changes were thrust upon the profession, through summer schools, journalism, conference lectures and consultancy work at QCA. I wish I
could claim that my contribution had proved more influential. Those making
decisions, however, often had different agendas from those of us who worked in the
field. Since their impositions were rarely based on research or classroom experience,
and so were unrealistic, there are signs that the concrete in which they seemed to be
set is cracking, if not crumbling. New voices, including those of 'real writers' such as
Philip Pullman, Michael Morpurgo and Anne Fine, are insistent and command the
interest of the media in their criticism of the Curriculum and the Strategy. Even more
relevant, it is clear that despite huge efforts made by teachers cajoled, threatened and
insulted by the inspection system, some of the targets are just not achievable. Ofsted
is being instructed to ease off and is itself subject to cuts. Now that the government
has discovered 'creativity' and has made the revelatory connection between
'excellence' and 'enjoyment', anything is possible.

The Criticism of Literature written for Children

1. Pro Patria: Poetry for young readers in the Great War: journal article -
2. 'Tell England' and the Perfection of Death: journal article - Children's
3. Lovely and melancholy reading: H.A. Vachell's 'The Hill': journal article,
   since 1945. (edited by Kim Reynolds and Nicholas Tucker) Aldershot: The
   Scolar Press, 1997
5. Tom Smith's Schooldays: chapter in book, School Stories from Bunter to
   Buckeridge. Conference Proceedings, National Centre for Research in
   Children's Literature. London: Roehampton Institute, 1999
6. Children at War: whole book, jointly authored with Kate Agnew. London:
   Continuum, 2001
7. Five Selected entries (from 21 entries - 8000 words) on authors and themes
Several of these pieces look back to texts written before 1950. In fact, my interests are far more eclectic than this concentration might suggest, for I am also very much concerned with literature currently produced for children. This concern is largely expressed through three areas of publication: around 70 reviews and articles for *The Times Educational Supplement* (1970-2000); regular feature articles and reviews for the magazine, *Books for Keeps*; and my editorship of the international refereed journal, *Children's Literature in Education*.

The first three journal articles in this section reflect my interest in fiction and poetry of the period before, during and immediately after the First World War. In 'Pro Patria......', I was concerned to reclaim for readers examples of the kind of poetry which young readers might actually have read during The Great War, as opposed to what we might well think they were reading, from our present perspective, such as the work of Sassoon, Owen *et al.* ('Dulce et Decorum Est.' must surely be the most read poem in secondary schools in the present day). The articles about *Tell England* and *The Hill* offer close readings of texts which were hugely popular not only on publication but for half a century afterwards. Both offer windows into contemporary cultural attitudes which contrast markedly with those of today. There is little written about these texts, but what there was, I read; for example, Jeffrey Richards' *Happiest Days* and the critical surveys by Isabel Quigly and P W Musgrave. For the most part, the research and hence the originality within the articles, arose out of my own reading of the primary texts and my knowledge of the historical and cultural contexts in which they were written. That knowledge was based on a life-long interest in school stories stemming from boyhood reading of my father's Sunday School prizes and bound annuals of *Boy's Own Paper*.

Much the same might be said of 'Tom Smith's Schooldays' first published by The National Centre for Research in Children's Literature at the University of Surrey Roehampton and recently republished by Pied Piper Publishing (2004). Here the primary texts, comics (or storypapers as they are known to the aficionado), are more ephemeral but arguably even more influential than *Tell England* or *The Hill* in their impact upon readers. The audience for the Thomson storypapers, *Rover*, *Wizard*, *Hotspur* and *Adventure*, was considered by A.J Jenkinson in his 1940 survey, *What Do Boys and Girls Read?* He reckoned that 'one in two boys at selective [grammar] schools and two out of three boys in non-selective [secondary modern] schools' read the papers - often three or all four of them, every week. That
could have meant a consumption by a dedicated reader (such as myself in 1946) of comfortably over 100,000 words per week. Jenkinson thought that one out of five girls, despite the male orientation of the stories, also read them. My guess is that readership was even higher after the war - I certainly read all four when I could smuggle them in past my mother who, for some reason of misplaced propriety based upon unsympathetic research, favoured Amalgamated Press's *Champion* to complement Arthur Mee's tediously worthy *The Children's Newspaper*. In my chapter, I could consult no previous discussions since these massively popular storypapers have received no close attention - for Orwell's famous dismissal of storypapers is unworthy of him. I focus on the post-war years when the school stories I was interested in, though set in boarding schools, actually reflected the egalitarian attitudes of Attlee's Britain rather than those of Frank Richards or Winston Churchill. Again, I argued that such reading offers unique and reliable cultural insights. I also suggested that those storypapers may well have provided a ready transition to 'whole books' for the kind of readers we later came to identify as 'reluctant'.

My next submission, the chapter entitled 'Movable Books' in *Children's Book Publishing in Britain since 1945* is similar to the last pieces only in that it enables its reader to visit a literary field much neglected or even scorned by researchers and critics. The editors, Kim Reynolds and Nicholas Tucker, initially invited me to write about comics for their collection of essays, but I asked them if they still had a subject on offer about which I knew nothing - I was looking for something which would take me into unfamiliar territory. Not surprisingly, I soon realised, they had found no-one to write about the history of the publishing of Movable Books in their chosen period, and the topic certainly matched my personal criterion of absolute ignorance.

Definitions of the term 'Movable Books' proved to be a necessary early task, and this emerged as my searches continued: pop-ups, volvelles, lift-the-flaps, pull-the-tabs, books which urged you to sniff the illustrations or fire a miniature medieval siege engine. Little had been written about movables other than in ephemeral articles in publishers' professional journals or in coffee-table books such as Peter Haining's *Movable Books*. My research led me to two rich sources in particular. The first was Michael Dawson at his home in Bath. From here, he ran Ampersand Books, the only specialist firm in the field; he also worked at his draftsman's board, crafting repairs on valuable old examples of paper engineering. Dawson had travelled from the
Czech Republic to California in pursuit of people and information, a little of which he had published in trade magazines. He was generous in sharing his knowledge and information with my tape recorder.

My second resource was discovered in the basement stacks of the National Museum of Childhood at Bethnal Green with its Renier and Saekel-Jelkmann collections. Gaining access to this treasure-house was as tricky as penetrating Fort Knox, but I spent several days there, locked in by the conspiratorially helpful curator, Tessa Rose Chester, handling texts I could never have found elsewhere. As I worked, I realised that I would have to reach back beyond 1945 to mention some of the artists and paper engineers of previous generations whose ingenuity is still influential in this field today. The process of production, stretching sometimes from Europe to California to chains of workers in third world countries and back to Europe, and the financing of the products, were fascinating and little known. I would like to think that later researchers and critics - and they are needed in this field - will find that some of the ground has been cleared for them. The legacy of this research and publication proved to be a number of attractive invitations to national conferences and international seminars (for example, at the home of the Royal Society for the Arts and at Douai in Northern France), contributions to reference works, regular reviewing of novelty books, and a collection of movable texts which has cost me far more than I should have spent.

*Children at War* was written with Kate Agnew, whom I had never met before we were paired by the project’s editor, Morag Styles. Other books produced in this Continuum series, I believe, (four came out close together) were written by two or three authors who were not expected to correspond or work on each others’ manuscripts. This was fair enough in these cases, for they were focussing on different individual novelists, but such an approach seemed to me inappropriate for our topic of the treatment of war in literature for children. Three authors were suggested to us by the editor, but a number of novelists had found just one, or maybe two ‘war books’ in them. Were we to ignore, say, Nina Bawden's *Carrie’s War* or Paul Gallico's *The Snow Goose*? And, it seemed to me, so many children (myself among them) had come to reading about war by way of popular writing - storypapers or series fiction (such as the adventure stories of W E Johns or Geo.E Rochester); and, since 1970, there had been some fine picturebooks (Michael Foreman, Raymond Briggs, Roberto Innocenti) treating the subject.
I exchanged emails with Kate and then visited her a couple of times. Slowly, we devised a shape for the book. There were four lengthy chapters, with two apiece being 'signed' by Kate and myself. The initial evolution of the book and the constructive close reading of each other's manuscripts were productive processes and, I think, led to a stronger final text which was generally kindly received by reviewers (see Appendix 2). I admit to a particular satisfaction with my first chapter, 'From the Great War to the Gulf', which provides an overview of the treatment of war in literature for children from 1914 - 2000. I discovered many texts I had not encountered before, including comics and storypapers as well as novels (some in translation) and poems. Shifting national attitudes are clearly evident, from the confident jingoism of 1914 to the ambivalence which surrounded Britain's involvement in the Falklands and the first Gulf War. That extensive research also fostered an interest in the visual images in literature for children about war which I could not deal with adequately in a book with no budget for illustrations. A collection of some 150 slides, made for me by our ever-reliable technician at the School of Education, covering the period 1914-2000, has proved useful in several plenary lectures I have given at conferences on this topic. A new impression of the book is planned for 2005 by the publishers.

In a frame of mind rather similar to that in which I researched 'Movable Books', I responded to a lengthy list of topics offered by Victor Watson for his Cambridge Guide to Children's Books in English. I had always wanted to learn more about Thomas Bewick, George Cruikshank, Edmund Evans and Richard Doyle, for example. So I secured those subjects at once. Often I would buy texts to work on them, read biographies and criticism, and then write 100 or 200 words for a fee of a few pounds. So there was an element of researcher's indulgence here, but the several months I spent on the entries for The Guide coincided with my 'phasing down' of teaching at the School of Education as part of an early retirement package. In fact, the wish to undertake this kind of more leisured research was among the reasons which prompted my acceptance of the deal.

Eventually, I wrote 21 entries for the Guide, five of which are included in this submission. An entry on Contes de ma mere l'Oye reflects my interest in fairy tales, especially 'Little Red Riding Hood' (I have collected some 90 versions and box-files of ephemera linked to the tale and recently published a chapter on the story in an Open University reader, Children's Cultural Worlds). The entry about movable books...
extends the period covered in the chapter on this topic mentioned above. A note on penny dreadfuls serves as an example of my short entries. There is a piece on Storytelling which complements work mentioned in the next section. I also include 1000 words on Geoffrey Trease - it was a privilege to read so many of his books and to review a writing career stretching over seven decades. I went to visit him at his home on the outskirts of Bath. When I met him, he was frail, but mentally sharp. 'I've got four books in press at the moment,' he said, almost before I had sat down. 'Let me tell you about......' He approved my entry in draft, but sadly, before the Guide was published, I travelled to Malvern for his memorial service in the Abbey.

Drama and Storytelling


4. **'Up and Down the City Road': history through dramatic action**: chapter in *Historical Fiction for Children: Capturing the Past* edited by Fiona M Collins and Judith Graham. London: David Fulton Publishers, 2001

My early interest in drama was that of an English graduate with conventional notions of theatre - at school, I had been a sportsman, and you couldn't do sport and act in plays. The plays I directed at Manchester Grammar School, mentioned in the Introduction to this Overview, had taken me further, but still along a traditional path. I made sure the actors didn't bump into the furniture, spoke clearly and were often facing towards the audience. My involvement in improvisational workshops during my summers working for Harvard and the work I found already in progress at Exeter under Paddy Creber in 1970 ignited an interest which has yet to be extinguished. In the early seventies, I undertook a thorough, fifteen month in-service course provided by the Devon County Drama Advisory Service, in those halcyon days a seven strong team.
The first piece in this section, 'Dramatic Play and the Training of Teachers' arose from that course and appeared in *English in Education*, the journal of the National Association for the Teaching of English (NATE). As the references to the article show, some background reading was helpful but essentially this was action research, based closely on the drama workshops I taught each week to the PGCE group at Exeter. Rereading it after 25 years, I am struck, even moved, by the articulate honesty of the students' perceptions about themselves, their peers, and their work on teaching practice. Their contributions provide evidence, were it needed, that those idealistic, exploratory times were not vacuous or sensation-seeking as politicians from the Thatcher and Major - and now Blair - years would have us believe. These students, and I hope their tutor, were hammering out their own theory from practical experience; we needed to if we were going to teach drama that was not comprised of a few games and warm-ups.

My other three submissions come from much later in my career. In the interim period, my drama work was largely focussed on running workshop courses, helping students devise and direct their own productions, teaching studio-based Shakespeare courses each year, taking evolved productions out on tour to primary schools in Devon and Cornwall, and using drama techniques to enhance the responses of children and undergraduates to literary texts. Much of this teaching at Exeter was done with my colleague and friend, Stephen Cockett. In the mid-nineties, we accepted a series of invitations to Poland, the Czech Republic and Slovakia to teach week-long courses designed to enhance fluency in English through drama, poetry, storytelling and picturebooks. My final visit in this series was a solo trip to Outer Mongolia; after that, there was nowhere else to go.

Four of the five Polish visits were particularly satisfying, since we worked eight hours a day with enthusiastic second year undergraduates at the Pedagogical University in Cracow. After work, Steve and I would look forward to winding down over a slow meal or maybe a concert or theatre in the magical area around the great square in Cracow. As often as not, we'd be hijacked by the students who wanted more time to practise their English or to plunge us into some jazz cellar which exhausted me but delighted Steve, an accomplished exponent of the jazz clarinet and sax. Once again, the publication which arose from this work, *Keep Talking*, reflects practice and was based upon action research; we were lucky enough to have funding to allow us to return to Cracow to talk with students about the impact of the course
several months after the event. The book describes our practical work and, to some extent, the theory which lay behind it. Here, I am afraid, there are no signed chapters. Steve and I had taught together for so many years and were fortunate to have such trust in each other that we planned each session together in the evening, revised it before and over breakfast and then revised it again in mid-session when one or the other of us would step in and redirect the activity. We were content with this pattern, not least because we wanted the students to experience and perhaps imitate this flexibility themselves. In the end, Steve certainly first-drafted about half the chapters and I wrote the original versions of the others.

*Keep Talking* (for example in Chapters 6, 7 and 8) broadens the definition of drama to include oral storytelling and the use of poetry leading to movement and oral work. These would have been chapters which I first-drafted, for my enthusiasm for storytelling had been sparked by a single session given by an outstanding professional storyteller, Hugh Lupton, at a conference I had attended in the mid-eighties at the University of East Anglia. As a consequence of that evening, I had found ways of developing my own abilities in storytelling and learning to tell stories became a regular feature of our BEd course at Exeter. By Christmas of their first term, all our students had been into a primary school to tell stories, without a script, to children.

In 1997 and 1998 I was fortunate enough to work in a drama research project involving 5 academics from Exeter University paired with 5 academics from the University of Santa Catarina, Florianopolis, Southern Brazil. My area was to be storytelling and this led me, with great good fortune, into professional partnership with Dr Gilka Girardello. The pattern was that each academic pairing spent three weeks working together in each country. So, in Brazil, which I visited in late 1997, Gilka and I visited schools, teachers' workshops, universities, festivals, performances and even a storytelling group organised by the University of the Third Age.

When Gilka came to Exeter the following year, her programme was similar to mine in Brazil. She saw a range of storytelling and dramatic activities: for example, one visit was to a session in a Plymouth school where my present supervisor, Professor Michael Wilson, in his alternative incarnation as Mike Dunstan, was telling stories. Then again, she watched me in role as Geoffrey Chaucer in a middle school in Dorchester, telling the children my Nun's Priest's Tale and giving them some experience in the speaking of my language. Our main task was supposed to be to
observe but our natural impulse to tell stories proved too strong and in Brazil we discovered that it is perfectly possible to tell through a translator, especially if she is a fine storyteller herself. In the UK, Gilka needed no translator and became an instant favourite in several primary schools.

The chapter in *Ensino do Teatro* stems directly from our work together gathering information, experience and insight. We chose a dialogue format since that reflected the six weeks of conversation we had enjoyed, travelling between visits, talking with other storytellers or sharing meals in our homes with families and friends. The intended audience of Brazilian teachers and students shapes our writing to a degree. Gilka's work in Florianopolis was in its infancy then and she wanted material she could use with teachers, would-be community storytellers and undergraduates taking courses on storytelling. Her success has been outstanding. There are now many thriving groups of storytellers and a huge annual festival. Her storytelling workshop courses at two universities are oversubscribed. In January, 2005, she will be co-hosting a major international storytelling conference. Sadly, a lack of funding prevented us from writing the book about storytelling we had planned but we have hopes that I might make a return visit in the future.

My contribution to our dialogue is included in manuscript format in the present submission, but unfortunately there never was an English translation of Gilka's part in the 'conversation'. We needed time to be able to talk and write together, but Gilka's plans meant that she spent the last few days of her visit in London, meeting others interested in our field. We managed to reach a final draft of the piece the day before she left for Brazil by meeting in the lobby of the London University Institute of Education to agree the text. Despite its precipitate birth, the piece itself was well received and proved to be of practical value. Gilka tells me it has often been quoted in Brazilian articles and in teaching contexts; this Spring, a slightly revised version has been reprinted in a new collection Gilka has edited about storytelling, *Baus e chaves da narracao de historias* (2004), which she hopes will extend her work even further.

The final text in this section is a chapter from *Historical Fiction for Children: Capturing the Past* edited by Fiona M Collins and Judith Graham. I was invited to contribute to this collection, choosing my own topic within the field of historical fiction written for children. By fortunate chance, I was much absorbed in a
historical drama project when the invitation arrived. My chapter gives an account of the genesis, production and aftermath of *Up and Down the City Road*, a play involving 50 10-12 year old participants which I wrote and co-directed in a Dorchester Middle School.

There are two layers of research in this project. First, the chapter describes the discovery of a Victorian set of carved Punch and Judy puppets accompanied by a letter written by a relative of their maker, Mr E J Shears, a street Punchman who played before Queen Victoria at the Palace. The present owner of the puppets ran a firm in the Scottish borders, making small ceramic models. He wanted to reproduce the Punch set commercially, and asked me to write the text of a picture book, to be sold alongside his models, which would tell the story of how Mr Shears somehow ended up amusing Queen Victoria. I wrote the text and Neil Dishington, the artist, produced some vibrant colour illustrations. In the end, for reasons connected with the application of VAT, the book and models were never produced. The story went into my archives, but a couple of years later my partner, Pam, re-read it and suggested that, because the story had been written with visual illustration in mind, it might work well as a play. To write the original text, I had sought out historical information, often from the work of Henry Mayhew, author of *London Labour and the London Poor* (1861-2). Now it was Mayhew who gave me the mix of street entertainers, mudlarks, rogues and vagabonds who peopled the play, from Mr Jeremy Tiffin, Bug-Destroyer to Her Majesty Queen Victoria to Mr E J Shears the Punchman himself. *The London Illustrated News*, Dore's engravings and Dickens' journalism were productive sources for the settings and incidents I needed. I read extensively for background and detail: Kellow Chesney's *The Victorian Underworld*, and Patrick Howarth's *The Year is 1851* were typical of the many texts I consulted.

The second area of research, explicitly evident in the submitted chapter, was a series of taped conversations I had with children who had been involved with the play. As will be evident from other sections of this Overview, such discussions have always excited me as a guide to understanding what and how children have learned. With the chapter for the book in mind, my particular concern here was to try to determine in what ways the play had influenced their understanding of history. The revelations were not startling, but comments such as 'Sometimes it feels as if you're actually real when you're in the middle of the fair or somewhere' or 'I like doing it rather than just reading or seeing it on TV' seemed to reflect the heightened sense of
empathy which is at the heart of memorable history teaching. In an ideal world, I
would write a postscript to the chapter, tracking down the cast three years into their
secondary school and checking what memories survive of their experience of the
play.

I have conducted modest investigations of this kind at the University. For
example, I have discussed with individual Fourth Year BEds what they remembered
from their experience as First Years of creating visual collages rather than writing
essays in response to novels or poems. Each time, I have been impressed and often
surprised by the detail that remains in learners' minds from these less conventional,
more oblique modes of learning. According to their testimonies, their learning was
richer than that yielded by essay writing though it may be that the factor of novelty
needs to be taken into account (what if essays were the rarity and collages were the
norm?). Drama could use research of a more systematic and sophisticated kind than
mine to confirm its worth as a means of learning within traditional academic
disciplines such as history.

The last section of the chapter in Historical Fiction returns to a theme I
touched on in my contribution to Peter Hunt's Encyclopaedia, mentioned earlier in
this Overview. The kind of learning which was on offer through the production of Up
and Down the City Road is difficult to assess, even difficult to detect. Sometimes the
lessons learned (in such areas as self-confidence as well as historical empathy or
factual information) may emerge in seemingly unrelated contexts, months or even
years later. The elusiveness of this kind of learning does not diminish its value.
Utilitarian governments in search of votes have little time for aims and objectives not
subject to simple assessments translated into results in league tables. Thus, it is all the
more important to gather evidence to support practice which leads to the kind of
learning discussed in this chapter. A friend and colleague for whom I taught as a
visiting professor at Dartmouth College, New Hampshire was previously a long-
serving Head of English in a Canadian High School. He used to direct as many as
five productions a year, from Lear to HMS Pinafore. In a book which is not yet
completed, but for which I have drafted an introductory essay, he has gathered
together papers, written twenty or even thirty years after the event, by cast members
from his plays. The lasting impact made upon them through the experience is
remarkable, as is the clarity of their recall. In some cases, their life-careers have been
shaped by those experiences in the High School auditorium or studio.
Editorial Work


2. *Writers, Critics and Children* edited by Geoff Fox *et al.*


   Crediton: Greystones Publishing, 2004

I have included my editorial work in this submission for the PhD since, after my work on teaching based on readers' responses, this is probably my most influential contribution to scholarship.

With hindsight, I realise I was an editor of a kind even during my early teaching years at Manchester Grammar School. I was often asked to read manuscripts for colleagues and could not resist making detailed suggestions for changes, both major and minor. There was something of an in-house joke in the staff room about the number of Introductions in which I was acknowledged. In subsequent years, apart from the editorial work I shall mention later, I have edited a series of economically produced hardback fiction for schools (Collins Cascades - some fifty titles during my editorship) and the Collins Classics collection. For five years, I also worked on the Publications Committee of the National Association for the Teaching of English, editing, designing and seeing through the press several books and booklets, including two of NATE's long-running best-sellers, Brian Merrick's guides to teaching poetry in the primary school.

Of greater significance in the context of this Overview was my appointment in 1970 to the founding editorial committee of a journal, *Children's Literature in Education* (*CLE*) originally published by Ward Lock Educational. In 1977, I became the principal editor and from 1982 (when we became a co-production with one 'leg' in
North America), joint editor in chief. The journal can claim to be one of the leading refereed international journals in a still expanding field.

At this point, I want to digress briefly to make a case for the inclusion of editorial work in a submission for a PhD. I would argue that editing is an activity unjustly disregarded in academic circles. By its nature, at its best it is self-effacing, even invisible, in the finished product on the page. Much of the work is without any apparent product at all, though it is essential and also time-consuming. For every article CLE currently publishes, three or more are rejected. Our editors try to make detailed comments as constructively and gently as we can, depending in part on how well we know the disappointed contributor. Sometimes we make lengthy suggestions for improvements and then hear no more; or find the piece, incorporating our improvements, has subsequently appeared elsewhere. The work of selection is important in maintaining the standards of which Academe likes to boast. All the more irritating, therefore, is the fact that Academe is slow to acknowledge those who actually carry out editorial work. Career-minded mentors to newly-appointed academics in Exeter used to advise their charges to avoid editorial responsibilities; their recommendation was to advance your own interests and forget about facilitating the work of others, if you wanted promotion. Yet, to labour the obvious, there would be no context for the publications of the research community if editors did not edit.

My own motivation has not been magnificent altruism. The work has been thoroughly satisfying in itself and has yielded many rewarding professional friendships. I simply want to note that initiating, selecting, negotiating, encouraging, shaping (sometimes into intelligibility) and what might be called 'polishing' are skills that require a kind of creativity and originality of their own, to say nothing of tact and perseverance. The most eminent contributors sometimes need saving from themselves - one or two of our best-known novelists, I have come to realise, must have excellent desk-editors at the publishing house. I have probably played a part, to greater or lesser degrees, in 'midwiving' around 400 articles for the journal. Our contributors have ranged from distinguished academics (for example, Q D Leavis, David Holbrook, Barbara Hardy, Margaret Meek, Aidan Chambers, Peter Hollindale, Fred Inglis) to well known novelists and poets for children (Ted Hughes, Patricia Beer, Philip Pullman, U A Fanthorpe, R S Thomas, Andrew Davies, Charles Causley, Rosemary Sutcliff, Roy Fuller, Elizabeth Jennings, Michele Roberts et al). Many of the leading critics have written for us several times. We have also tried to maintain a deliberate
policy, not always successfully, of publishing younger scholars, helping some of the latter to translate chapters from theses into journal articles often proves a difficult task.

Over our 34 years, the journal has changed ownership six times. We are now the property of Springer (I think the largest publisher of academic journals in the world). We are a quarterly, published in New York. 50% of each issue is provided by the UK Editorial Board; the remainder of the copy comes from Dr Margaret Mackey, our North American Co-editor, from the University of Alberta in Edmonton. The membership of the UK Editorial Board is currently strong and the advent of email has enhanced communication between members beyond the dreams of the founding committee, of whom I am the sole survivor. Dr Mackey is a distinguished editor and, even better, a reliable, witty and devastatingly perceptive email correspondent. She works through a team of reviewers drawn from all parts of North America. The UK Board, with the advantage of geography, aims to meet at least three times a year. We comprise Dr David Rudd of Bolton Institute, Dr David Lewis formerly of Exeter University, Dr Victoria de Rijke of Middlesex University, Pam Barnard lately Vice-Principal of Exeter College of Further Education and now a consultant to QCA and DfES, and myself. In their different areas of the field, all my colleagues are well respected. Dr Mackey deals with articles submitted from North America, leaving 'The Rest of the World' to the UK Board. In the last few months, apart from a good flow of UK contributions, we have received pieces from Greece, Slovenia, Australia (a productive source from the outset), Israel and the Netherlands. We are always anxious about the flow, however, since there have been periods of drought in the past. We commission a fair number of our pieces - probably 70% of those which we eventually publish.

For the doctorate submission, I enclose three sample copies of CJE from 2003, the only issues in fact of which I have duplicates. If I had multiple copies available, I would like to have offered our 25th Anniversary Edition (Spring, 1995) which included articles by Margaret Meek, Maurice Saxby, Margaret Mackey (before her editorship), Michael Rosen, Brian Alderson and Peter Hollindale. I am also especially proud of Issue 104 (March 1997) in which Andrew Davies, U A Fanthorpe, Russell Hoban and Michele Roberts discussed the influence upon their writing of a book remembered with pleasure from childhood.
A glance at the three issues submitted will show the range of both contributors and topics. The Spring issue includes pieces on Philip Pullman's *The Amber Spyglass* and an illustrated article from Lesley Delaney, who at the time was studying for the MA in Children's Literature at the University of Surrey Roehampton. 'Capitalist Bears and Socialist Modernisation; Chinese Children's Literature in the Post-Mao Period' reflects our international scope, since the author, Lijun Bi, grew up in China before moving to Australia where she teaches at Monash University. In the Autumn issue, one of the most distinguished UK scholars in Children's Literature, Peter Hollindale, recently retired as Reader in English Literature at York University, provides the first published consideration of all of Ursula le Guin's six Earthsea books. In the same issue, there is a liberally illustrated piece on John Ryan (author and illustrator of the Captain Pugwash books) by a young scholar, Matthew Eve, whose work we have fostered in the journal through the publication of four of his pieces; the latest, on C Walter Hodges, appeared in the issue for Spring, 2004. One UK originated piece in the Winter 2003 issue considers the cult 'Bad Beginnings' series by 'Lemony Snicket'; its author is Dr Bruce Butt, a young teacher in a Bristol inner-city school. A second piece, this time on Rudyard Kipling's *Puck of Pook's Hill*, is by Linda Hall, a recently retired university academic.

I have also submitted copies of two book collections of articles from earlier years of the journal; the two volumes enjoyed very different levels of success. *Writers, Critics and Children* was produced by the founding editorial team of the journal in 1975; I can claim some 75% of the work on this book The collection was my suggestion, and I secured publication through my contacts with Heinemann Educational. I also was instrumental in selecting and revising the articles, and I handled the new negotiations with authors, copyright fees, proof reading etc. The other committee members, however, had played full parts in editing the original articles in the journal itself. To our pleasure, *Writers, Critics and Children* was immediately adopted on publication as a set text for an Open University Course and remained in print well into the nineties. Printouts (and royalty fees) from the Authors' Licensing and Collecting Society show that individual articles (probably influential essays such as Ted Hughes's 'Myth and Education') and even the entire book are still photocopied in academic institutions.

I was sole editor of the second collection, *Celebrating Children's Literature in Education*, published to coincide with a conference to mark 25 years of
publication of the journal in 1995. Hodders were excellent during the preparation of the book and abysmal in promoting it (a change of editor at the publisher's probably accounted for the problems). There was little publicity, and what there was contained substantial factual errors. I think it is a better collection than *Writers, Critics and Children* and regret its failure in sales terms.

The last text in this section, *Fire! Fire!*, is a very different publication. Its inclusion was something of an afterthought, but I have decided it should be an integral element in my submission. The Glamorgan Notes for those preparing to submit for a PhD by publication speak of a researcher's journey and *Fire! Fire!* reflects one of the paths I am currently travelling. The book was one of two products from a large-scale community arts project in Crediton, my local market town, during 2003. Over the last decade, much of my energy and commitment has gone into helping to run the local Drama Centre, now renamed as an Arts Centre. For the last six years, I have served as Chair of the committee which is responsible for the Centre. Our regular provision includes a dozen weekly classes in the visual arts, street dance, poetry and yoga. We host small-scale touring professional theatre and mount fundraising events which give opportunity for Friends of the Centre to entertain each other in a variety of fashions. Led by an extraordinary and enterprising Artistic Director, we have staged four large-scale productions of Shakespeare with high production values in a purpose built scaffolding theatre in the centre of the town; budgets are around £20,000 per production and our work has been noticed in the national press. From a hillside by a lake in a nearby landscaped estate, we have sculpted (with a bulldozer and a £25,000 grant) an amphitheatre where five hundred people can attend outdoor events. The *Fire! Fire!* project was occasioned by the planned demolition of the local fire station in the town centre to make way for a new square, a project partly prompted by our own Shakespeare productions.

To mark the ending of this phase of Station 38's history, a specially commissioned play was performed in November, 2003. The first half took place outdoors, culminating in a huge fire sculpture of the Great Fire of Crediton in 1743, with the outlines of rooftops, windows and steeples blazing into the night sky. The audience then moved inside to the relative comfort of the fire station for the second half which drew upon interviews with the retained firefighters who make up the Station crew. The most dramatic moment of the week's run occurred on the Friday evening, when there was a real Shout (a call-out) in the middle of a performance.
Several of the retained firefighters were in the audience and shot up from their seats as if ejected, beepers beeping. Others, in only seconds it seemed, came racing through the set, to re-emerge donning their protective clothing *en route* for the pumps (the fire engines) to the wild applause of the audience, once they had decided this wasn't part of the play.

These firefighters are also at the centre of the book which appears in my submission. My role as editor was to work with the team the Centre assembled to produce the book: interviewer, author, photographer, cartoonist and designer, only one of whom had ever worked on a book before. With our designer, I also liaised with the printers, Short Run Press of Exeter, with whom I had produced several books for NATE in the mid-eighties. As always in such projects, time was of the essence, since the launch was planned for the evening before the play opened and was also to be held in the fire station itself. The manuscripts arrived from the author in separate sections within a relatively loose structure; so a firm shape for the book had then to be devised. Once I had that, the physical design of the book (an area which has always fascinated me) needed to be addressed. Our designer is an IT expert, and a mathematical genius, but with little experience of this kind of text. In front of his screen, we made our decisions about typeface, layout, margins, chapter headings, the siting of photographs and cartoons, use of icons and so on. PDF files went to and fro between us and the printer, with revisions and corrections at each stage. We duly collected bound copies from the factory two days before the launch.

We have been pleased by the reception of the book in the town and the county. I include *Fire! Fire!* not only for the reason that it 'places' me on my current journey, as it were; but also because I believe community arts offer an increasingly productive - and valuable - site for research in itself. The impact of the project still goes on. Our photographer was so absorbed by the work that she has become a retained firefighter herself. There is a far greater awareness in the town, and among all of us from the Centre who were in the play or compiled the book, of what our remarkable firefighters actually do. The project built upon, and developed, skills I had learned during my previous academic life. The progression seems a natural and interesting one which, I hope, may not yet have ended.

There may well be similar projects in the future, but most recently I have completed a book for 9-12 year olds about the life, works and writing practice of
Afterword

When I looked at the list of publications in my CV with a view to identifying the 'clusters' of interests recommended by the Guidance Notes issued by the University of Glamorgan, I saw the eclecticism of a Jack of Perhaps-Too-Many-Trades. I went abroad to teach summer schools when I might have been at my desk writing, for example. The invitations which came my way invariably seemed too intriguing to be resisted and I have rarely said 'No'. On balance, I can't say that I regret the choices.

In the event, the 'clusters' I have used took shape very readily. I hope this Overview essay provides a sufficient context for my work and then that the submissions will speak for themselves.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>References</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bawden, Nina</td>
<td>Carrie's War  London: Gollancz, 1973</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benton, Michael and Peter</td>
<td>Touchstones I-5  London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1969 ff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chesney, Kellow</td>
<td>The Victorian Underworld  London: Temple Smith, 1970</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dostoevsky, Feodor</td>
<td>The Idiot  London: Dent Everyman Library, 2002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doonan, Jane</td>
<td>Looking at Pictures in Picture Books  Stroud: The Thimble Press, 1993</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gallico, Paul</td>
<td>The Snow Goose  London: Methuen, 1941</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girardello, Gilka</td>
<td>Baus e chaves da narracao de historias  Florianopolis: SESC/SC, 2004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greene, Graham</td>
<td>The Destructors  London: Picture Post, 1954</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Haining, Peter</td>
<td>Movable Books  London: New English Library, 1979</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Holland, Norman</td>
<td>5 Readers Reading  New Haven: Yale University Press, 1975</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Holt, John</td>
<td>How Children Fail  New York: Pitman, 1964</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Howarth, Patrick</td>
<td>The Year is 1851  London: Collins, 1951</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Iser, Wolfgang
The Act of Reading: A Theory of Aesthetic Response

Jenkinson, A J
What do Boys and Girls Read? London: Methuen, 1940

Kehily Mary Jane and Swann, Joan
Children's Cultural Worlds Milton Keynes: The Open University, 2003

Kipling, Rudyard
Puck of Pook's Hill London: Macmillan, 1906

Kozol, Jonathan
Death at an Early Age Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1967

Lesser, Simon O
Fiction and the Unconscious Boston: Beacon Press, 1957

Mayhew, Henry
London Labour and the London Poor London: Spring Books nd

Merrick, Brian
Exploring Poetry: 8-13 Sheffield: NATE, nd

Merrick, Brian and Balaam, Jan
Exploring Poetry: 5-8 Sheffield: NATE

Musgrave, P W

Naughton, Bill

Orwell, George
'Boys' Weeklies' in Horizon No.3, March, 1940

Pirsig, Robert
Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance London: The Bodley Head, 1974

Pullman, Philip
The Amber Spyglass London: Scholastic Point, 2001

Quigly, Isabel
The Heirs of Tom Brown Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982

Richards, Jeffrey
Happiest Days Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1982

Rosenblatt, Louise
Literature as Exploration New York: MLA, 1938

Rosenblatt, Louise

Rogers, Carl
On Becoming a Person Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1961

Sarland, Charles
'Ideology, Politics and Children's Literature' in Understanding Children's Literature, edited by Peter Hunt London: Routledge, 1999
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Publisher/Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Squire, James</td>
<td><em>The Responses of Adolescents to Four Short Stories</em></td>
<td>Urbana, Illinois: NCTE, 1964</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tolkien, J R R</td>
<td><em>Tree and Leaf</em></td>
<td>London: Unwin Books, 1938/64</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>