

## Children's Book Council of Australia JUDGES' REPORT 1975

### GENERAL COMMENTS

The generally low standard of entries made this a disappointing year. There was a dearth of new ideas. Some authors who wrote on important issues unfortunately gave the impression of jumping on a fashionable band-wagon rather than of writing from deeply held convictions. Conservatism and poverty were dominant themes. There was also much maudlin sentimentality, and avoidance of urban realities in favour of outbackery, and an overabundance of children without the complications of parents or families. One of the strengths of Ruth Park's *Callie's Castle* was its sensitive treatment of family relationships.

The production of too many of the books was uneven, backward and either detrimental to an appreciation of the text or unsuited to the age groups for which the books were apparently intended. This highlights once more the need, frequently emphasized by this Council, for competent children's Editors, working with book designers, in more Australian publishing houses. The larger number of entries suitable for younger readers was especially encouraging. It is recognized that such books, which are of great importance to a child's development, are also particularly difficult to write.

Again there was a shortage of stimulating and imaginative non-fiction. Once again award money came from the Literature Board of the Australia Council.

### CLASS A—Book of the Year

No Award.

None of the books entered satisfied the judges in all respects, particularly when related to *The Conditions of Entry and Judging*: "This award is primarily for literary merit. However, the quality and design of the book as a whole are part of the standard, so the judges will consider: literary merit, quality of illustrations; appeal to children; book design and production; quality of printing, etc."

### Highly Commended

Ruth Park *Callie's Castle* Angus & Robertson

Awarded \$1250.

This short and sensitive treatment of a range of family relationships is well balanced and carefully handled. Callie's need for privacy and a place of her own within the home will be appreciated by all readers with younger brothers and sisters. The solution wittingly recognises not only that Callie will grow up, but also that the younger children will in turn have a need for their own place. The black and white illustrations by Kilmey Niland satisfactorily interpret the text and are evocative of the mood of the story. Unfortunately the impact of the book is diminished and blunted by a totally unsympathetic production. Ill-chosen typeface, mean margins, infelicitous chapter headings, and a title page that beggars polite description combine with an overall insensitivity to the intimate relationship which should exist between text and design.

### Commended

Colin Thiele *Magpie Island* Rigby

Awarded \$750.

An impressively produced book. In spite of a weak beginning the story of a magpie surviving on an island far out to sea grows in intensity as the problems implicit in the situation are developed. In this Colin Thiele demonstrates a sincere concern for the environment and for ecological truth. The often excellent prose is marred by an unevenness and a variation in tone which a competent editor might have expurgated. Although many of the illustrations, especially those in colour, are interesting and contribute to the success of the book, some of the others accentuate an intrinsic uncertainty which finds occasional expression in sentimentality.

### Other Entries

It was thought two other works were worthy of mention: Colin Thiele's *Uncle Gustav's Ghosts* (Rigby) for its period and regional flavour and for its earthy slapstick humour; and Noreen Shelley's *Faces in a Looking Glass* (Oxford) for its ambitious attempt to relate to the problems of personal relationships in modern urban life, which may find a sympathetic response from many teenage girls.

### CLASS B

#### General

The variety of formats entered in this class led the judges to the conclusion that more definition of what is eligible would be helpful both to publishers and to the judges.

There was a general lack of inventiveness and individuality of style which was sometimes manifested in a banality of text and illustration, and in an ugliness of concept and treatment.

### PICTURE BOOK OF THE YEAR

A. B. Paterson *The Man from Ironbark* Illustrated by Quentin Hole Collins.

The exigencies of the verse require a highly stylised approach to illustration. Quentin Hole has achieved a total unity of effect in which his witty double-page spreads provide a counterpoint to the verse.

The composition of these spreads and the quality of the colours are outstanding features of the book which are reinforced by the apt period details and the compression of action. Although the facial types and expressions might appear to lack diversity, the choric effect thereby achieved is closely related to the rhythms of the verse, and allows attention to focus on the cat, which is used as a vehicle for emotional expression. This is a book which has greater subtleties than a first examination reveals.

### Highly Commended

No Award.

### Commended

Ron and Francaia Forbes *The Wind Comes* Hicks Smith & Sons

This book succeeds in its vitality and the potential it offers for extending a child's imagination. The not entirely representative collages often suc-

ceed in capturing the many moods of the wind. Unfortunately the text is not an unqualified success, and this is at times reflected in a slight monotony of illustration. The quality of the original artwork may have suffered a loss of clarity and definition in the printing process. This is most noticeable in the textures of the collages.

*Diugurba* A.N.U. Press

Written and illustrated by young Aborigines during their training as teachers at Kornilida College, Darwin, this collection of myths and legends is directed to the younger reader.

Although the variety of authors and illustrators leads to a certain unevenness, the simple, natural language and often unforced illustrations make these stories widely accessible. At their most successful they reflect the vigour of the oral tradition.

#### CLASS C—The Visual Arts Board of the Australia Council Award for Illustration

This year, owing to the submission of some excellent illustrated books, as distinct from picture books for young children, the Visual Arts Board awards do not overlap with the Children's Book Council picture book awards.

\$1000 is awarded to the illustrator of each of the twin publications by Rigby, *Magpie Island* and *Storm Boy*, both written by Colin Thiele. To Roger Haldane, the illustrator of *Magpie Island* for the quality of his work as a collaborator. To Robert Ingpen, the illustrator of *Storm Boy* for so sensitively complementing the text.

These two productions, each in its own way, set an equally high standard. Roger Haldane evokes, both in colour and in line, the mood of the story. He sets the scene and highlights various incidents in a manner which informs, decorates and appeals.

Robert Ingpen's poetic yet restrained art is superb. Nevertheless he has chosen not to attempt the characterisation and intimate detail which might make the book more appreciated by the young.

The centre of interest in some of the double-page spreads regrettably tangles with the spine.

\$500 is awarded to illustrator Deborah Niland, for realising so successfully in *Stuff and Nonsense*, compiled by Michael Dugan and published by Collins, the purpose and scope of the title.

The coloured jacket design, repeated on the book itself, is splendidly successful. From cover to cover the line illustrations are consistently and tastefully zany.

#### JUDGES 1975:

ROSEMARY WIGHTON, B.A. (Hons.)  
 MARGARET AIKEN, B.A., Dip.Lib.  
 PETER J. PEGG  
 PEG YOUNG, M.A.C.E.  
 CHRISTINE FARMER, B.A., A.L.A.A.  
 PHIL BROWNLEE, B.A.

Visual Arts Board Consultant: NANCY PARKER

## CHILDREN'S BOOK COUNCIL OF AUSTRALIA AWARDS 1946-1975

From 1946 to 1958 the Book of the Year Awards were judged and presented by the Children's Book Council of New South Wales. In 1959 when the Children's Book Councils in the various States drew up the Constitution for the C.B.C. of Australia, the judging of this Annual Award became a Federal matter.

We have tried to compile a list not only of all winners, but all books that have received commendation. As you will see, our records are far from complete and we would greatly appreciate your help in bringing our records up to date. By July 1976 we would like to publish this full list in Reading Time. Please write direct to the Editor.

#### Class A: BOOK OF THE YEAR

- 1946 REES, Leslie *Karrawingi the Emu* 43 pp. Sands  
 Illus. by Walter Cunningham.
- 1947 No Award.
- 1948 HURLEY, Frank *Shackleton's Argonauts* 140 pp. A. & R.  
 Illus. photographs by author.
- 1949 VILLIERS, Alan *Whalers of the Midnight Sun* A. & R.  
 Woodcuts by Charles Pont. (Pub. U.K. 1934)
- 1950 No Award.
- 1951 WILLIAMS, Ruth *Venry of Sydney Town* 145 pp. A. & R.  
 Illus. by Rhys Williams.
- 1952 POWNALL, Eve *The Australia Book* 43 pp. Sands  
 Illus. by Margaret Senior.
- 1953 PHIPSON, Joan *Good Luck to the Rider* 149 pp. A. & R.  
 Illus. by Margaret Horder. and  
 MARTIN, J. H. and W. D. *Aircraft of Today and Tomorrow*  
 240 pp. A. & R.
- 1954 PARKER, K. L. *Australian Legendary Tales* 237 pp. A. & R.  
 Selected by Henrietta Drake-Brockman.  
 Illus. by Elizabeth Durack.
- 1955 TINDALE, N. B. and LINDSAY, H. A. *The First Walkabout*  
 129 pp. Longmans
- 1956 WRIGHTSON, Patricia *The Crooked Snake* 153 pp. A. & R.  
 Illus. by Margaret Horder.
- 1957 MOODIE-HEDDLE, E. *The Boomerang Book of Legendary Tales*  
 Illus. by Nancy Parker. 150 pp. Longmans
- 1958 CHAUNCY, Nan *Tiger in the Bush* 171 pp. Oxford  
 Illus. by Margaret Horder.
- 1959 CHAUNCY, Nan *Devil's Hill* 168 pp. Oxford  
 Illus. by Geraldine Spence. and  
 GUNN, John *Sea Menace* Constable