

THE BODLEY HEAD

WITH COMPLIMENTS

9 Bow Street, Covent Garden
London WC2E 7AL



The letter went round to
the BA on Thursday night.
This copy is for your
file.

Sue

Secretary to Judy Taylor
CHILDREN'S BOOK DEPARTMENT

Telephone 01-836 9081

JMT/SAT

Miss Mary Curtis,
The Booksellers Association,
152 Buckingham Palace Road,
London S.W.1.

11th February 1971.

Dear Miss Curtis,

Having heard confidentially that Whitbreads are considering creating book awards carrying cash prizes of £1000, I should like to ask if they would consider making one of these to the author of a book of fiction for children. As you know, there has been enormous progress made in this field of writing over the past few years both in standard and in presentation, and authors such as Lucy Boston, Hester Burton, Peter Dickinson, Leon Garfield, Alan Garner, William Mayne, Philippa Pearce, Katharine Peyton, Stephanie Plowman, Rosemary Sutcliff, have all written novels for children which could well hold their own in competition with novels published for adults. But children's writers have been sadly neglected for a long time in terms of awards.

Until recently the only one was the annual medal presented by the Library Association for "the most outstanding children's book", and this award carries no money prize. Then in 1967 'The Guardian' instigated their one hundred guinea annual prize for a children's novel published in Great Britain. In 1969 The Arts Council made their first award to the writer of a children's novel, and in 1970 International P.E.N. included children's fiction in their Silver Pen awards, but

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- 2 -

both these latter organisations say that children's books will not be included every year in their awards programmes.

The art of writing well for children is one of the most difficult of all skills. It is essential that the best writers should be encouraged to write for children. A prize of the kind that Whitbreads have in mind might well achieve that.

Yours sincerely,

Judy Taylor

cc Miss M. Edwards ✓