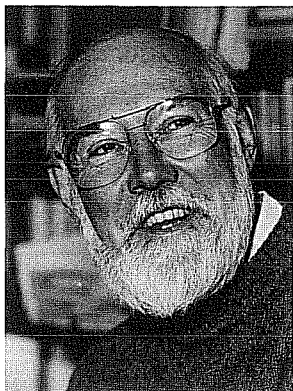


Guest editorial: “Somewhere meant for me”

John Smallbridge



In July, 1987, Canadian and British writers met with illustrators, teachers, publishers, media people, and book-sellers at the First Summer Institute of the Children's Literature Centre in London, Ontario. The Centre is a sponsoring body and a continuing entity. Broad in its intention and embrace, it co-ordinates and disseminates information about the writing and illustrating of books for children (ages 1-16), the criticism of such books, and finally the publishing, collecting, and use of such books. The Summer Institute is a natural part of the Centre's purpose and programme.

The title of the First Summer Institute, “Somewhere meant for me” (words from a poem by Walter de la Mare), was deliberately ambiguous and provocative. The subtitle, “Realism, fantasy, and history in children's books: focus and blend”, added more possibilities of ambiguity and interpretation. The whole title allowed the presenters an almost boundless area in which to locate their own particular interests and “somewheres”. Latitude was a necessity. As the conference progressed, the presenters identified and explored common, specific foci: an examination of our past and present relationships to British writers and a celebration of our Canadian achievements in writing and illustrating. Paradoxically, latitude engendered precise concentration.

Four main speakers — Jill Paton Walsh and John Rowe Townsend (both British), and Monica Hughes and Tim Wynne-Jones (Canadian) — were supplemented by two panels, one featuring illustrators (Maryann Kovalski, Ken Nutt, a.k.a. Eric Beddows, and Ian Wallace), the other introducing three novelists (Marianne Brandis, Barbara Greenwood, and Jean Little). Interest group sessions were led by John Hayes of Stratford, talking on “Adventures of a Book Collector”, Joanne Culley, discussing filmstrips from the “Meet the Author” series, Dodi Robb, showing clips from television shows for children, and Monica Hughes, leading a session on writing. Susan Hoffman and Sandra Price of the London Children's Book Shop set

up a special room to sell books selected for the occasion, including two "scoops": *Rob's place*, by John Rowe Townsend (offered at the Institute before it reached the retailers) and *Five Tides* by Jill Paton Walsh (brought from England). Two receptions gave opportunities for meetings and signings — many registrants now own autographed copies of the presenters' books. Professor Brian Strachan composed a song using the first stanza of de la Mare's song, "Somewhere meant for me": everyone sang it on opening night.

Registrants saw the presenters, heard their distinctive voices and accents, responded to their particular emphases and pauses. Such experiences cannot be reproduced in print, but when you read these selected papers and views, your sensitivity to voice, tone, emphasis, and pause, will help. I trust your reading will be close to a "hearing".

These few details of latitude, setting, sessions, purpose, and focus are meant to add to your reading enjoyment. During that reading you will share, in part, what the registrants (from Manitoba to Newfoundland) shared last summer.

Il ne s'agira pas ici de fournir une traduction de l'éditorial de John Smallbridge que nous vous invitons plutôt à lire dans le texte original. C'est grâce à lui que le Centre d'étude sur la littérature pour la jeunesse de l'Université Western Ontario à London a pu organiser son premier Institut Estival en juillet 1987. Il s'agissait surtout d'évaluer les liens spécifiques entre les auteurs du Canada anglais et ceux de Grande-Bretagne. L'Institut a donné lieu à des échanges vivants et fructueux dont vous aurez, nous l'espérons, le compte rendu le plus fidèle possible. Voilà une excellente façon de repasser l'été en lecture comme si nous étions à London sur les bords de la Thames.

Il nous fait plaisir de vous offrir aussi, dans ce numéro, un texte d'Hélène Beauchamp sur le théâtre pour la jeunesse à Montréal. Cette expérience unique de la Maison Théâtre méritait d'être évaluée honnêtement et d'être présentée au reste du Canada avec tout l'enthousiasme des premiers moments.

Enfin, nous sommes très fiers d'accueillir parmi les membres de notre Conseil de Rédaction Marie-Andrée Clermont, écrivaine et traductrice de grand renom. Sa compétence dans le domaine de la littérature pour la jeunesse au Canada nous sera d'un grand secours. Nous lui souhaitons une bienvenue tout à fait chaleureuse.

La rédaction