

Silly Verse for Kids

A001.01 First edition, 1959

Author: Spike Milligan

Dedication: *This book is dedicated to my bank balance.*

Publication Details: Dobson Books Ltd, London, 1959 (BNB, 2012)

Format: Hardback

Cover Design: Spike Milligan

Illustrations: Spike Milligan

Identifier: ISBN-10: 0234774789 ISBN-13: 978-0234774786 BNB: GB5916836

Physical Description: 61 pp illus. pink dj with blue illus. and black print, cream illus boards (see notes). 240 x 165 x 10 mm. 243 g. 8vo

Publication Price: 7s 6d

Spike's first book, the Foreword says: "*Many of these poems were written to amuse my children; some were written as the result of things they said at home. No matter what you say, my kids think I'm brilliant.*"

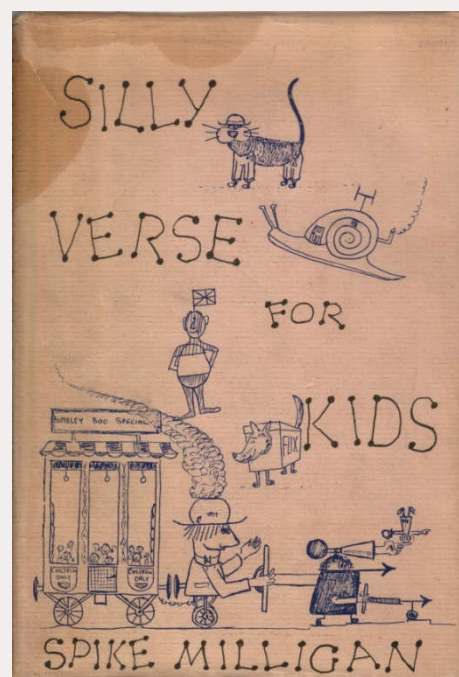
This passage hides the importance of this book to Spike. At the time of writing it his first marriage was breaking down, he was in Australia away from his children and he was desperately unhappy with the situation. Working on the book he hoped his children would see it as a token of his love for them. While he harboured these intense feelings the book is, in a Milliganesque way, dedicated to his bank balance.

The book includes the famous *On the Ning Nang Nong* which has been nominated as one of the funniest poems ever written and awarded Britain's favourite children's poem in 1998. The book also contains the poem *Teeth* which was one of the first poems to adorn the trains of the London Tube as part of the ongoing "Poems of the London Underground".

The dust cover shows the involvement Spike had with the publishing process. He illustrates it, does the title text and writes the blurbs on the cover flaps.

The book came out for Christmas 1959 and was immediately reprinted. (Scudamore, 1985). The dust cover of the first printing was a pink colour with the drawings in blue and the blurb and intro written and maybe typed by Spike himself. Subsequent printings are also known to have pink, yellow and light grey boards. I have a copy of this edition which is the 1966 seventh impression with orange boards and dust jacket. A 1976 edition is the ninth impression.

Eventually it came out in paperback but not until 1968, He had by then published four other books. The paperback was also reprinted numerous times. It is still available in paperback today. The most recent edition published in 2015.



Notes

It seems there is quite a variation in the colours of the covers and dust jacket for the first edition. Colin Button from Little Stour Books has told me that he acquired a Spike Milligan collection from a friend of Spike's which had several first editions and the covers were variously pink, cream, green, orange and yellow. The dust jackets similarly varied there being pink, grey, yellow and possibly green. The collector had made a point of collecting the different colours.

Colin's explanation is that Dobson's was a small publishing firm and that they could have used whatever colour paper that came to hand. I think it was more likely a conscious decision as Dobson's were not the printers, which were A Wheaton and Co an Exeter firm.

The Dust cover of Spike's first book

Spike's involvement in the design seems complete. All illustrations are by Spike. The blurbs on the flaps are by Spike in typewriter type and appear to have been positioned by hand. The script is not quite close enough to the edges. Resulting in the type at the end or beginning of each line being caught in the fold of the dust cover. This was corrected in later editions.

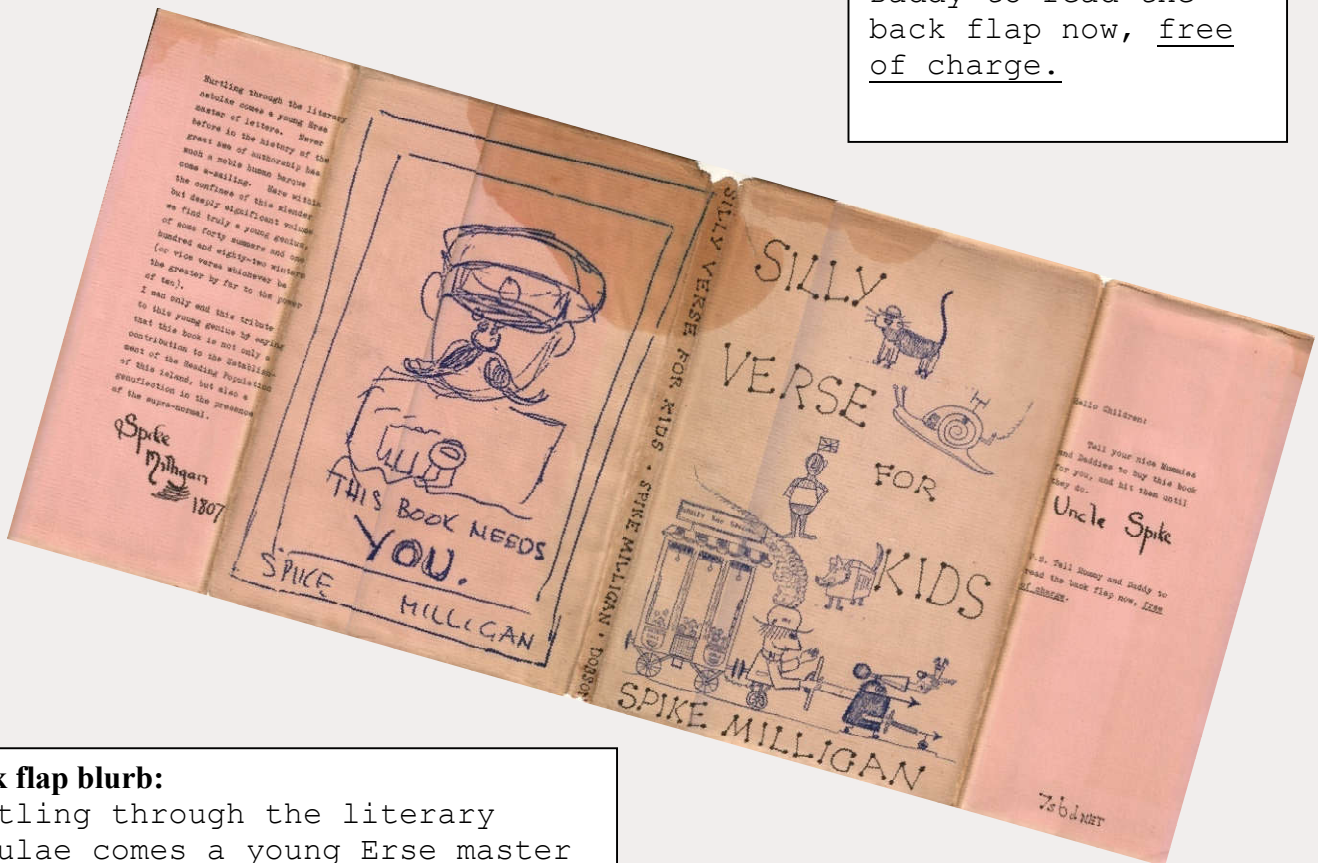
Front flap blurb:

Hello Children:

Tell your nice Mummies and Daddies to buy this book for you, and hit them until they do.

Uncle Spike

P.S. Tell Mummy and Daddy to read the back flap now, free of charge.



Back flap blurb:

Hurtling through the literary nebulae comes a young Erse master of letters. Never before in the history of the great sea of authorship has such a noble human barque come a-sailing. Here within the confines of this slender but deeply significant volume we find truly young genius, some forty summers and one hundred and eighty two winters (or vice versa whichever be the greater by far to the power of ten).

I can only end this tribute to this young genius by saying that this book is not only a contribution to the Establishment of the Reading Population of this island, but also a genuflection in the presence of the supra-normal.

Spike Milligan 1807.

A001.02 Penguin edition, 1968

Publication Details:

Penguin, 1968 First thus edition. (BNB, 2012)

Editor: Kaye Webb

Format: Mass market paperback

Illustrations: Spike Milligan

Identifier: ISBN-10:

0140303316 ISBN-13:

9780140303315 BNB:

GB6804097 Puffin series no. P331

Physical Description:

70pp (71p), ill., 180 x 110 x 6 mm. 68g.

Publication Price: 2/6

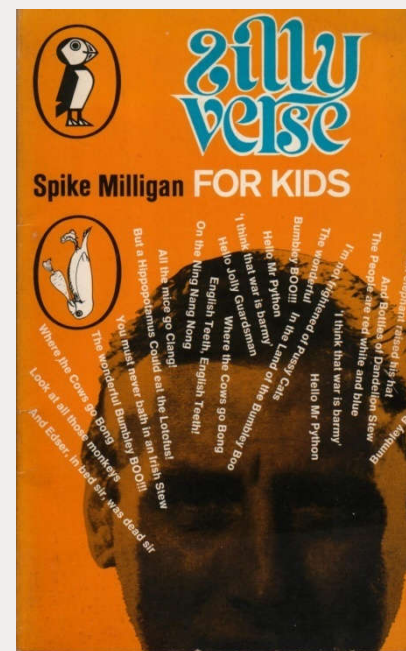
On a 1981 printing of the paperback edition is:-

“Published by Puffin Books in 1968:

Reprinted 1968(twice), 1970, 1971, 1972, 1973 (twice), 1974 (twice), 1975, 1976, 1977, 1979, 1980, 1981”.

Today Penguin has stopped listing the reprints but the book is still in print.

The paperback edition is supplemented by some later poems and two other items. One poem from the hardback edition, *On the Bright Azurian Sea*, is excluded and eight items are added, six poems, a map and a cartoon from *A Dustbin of Milligan* (1961) and *A Little Pot Boiler* (1963).



A001.03 Puffin edition, 1973

Publication Details: Harmondsworth: Puffin, (25 Jan 1973) New Impression edition (Puffin Books, 2014)

Editor: Kaye Webb

Format: Mass market paperback

Illustrations: Spike Milligan

Identifier: ISBN-10: 0140303316 ISBN-13: 978-0140303315

Physical Description: 12mo 68pp (71p): ill., 1map; 180 x 110 x 6 mm

A001.04 Puffin edition, 1982

Publication Details: Harmondsworth: Puffin, 1982 Reprint edition (BNB, 2012)

Format: Mass market paperback

Illustrations: Spike Milligan

Identifier: ISBN-10: 0140303316 ISBN-13: 978-0140303315 BNB: GB8415739

Physical Description: 72 pp: ill., 1map; 180 x 110 x 6 mm. xx gm.

Publication price: £0.85

The publication date for this edition is found on the Puffin Books website. No idea why they list it. Amazon uses the date too and refers to the book as a new impression edition. There is no discernible difference between the 1973 printing and the original 1968 paperback edition. My requests to Penguin for an explanation for this date have been ignored.

In my 1981 printing the editor's name is not on the half-title page where it usually was recorded, beginning with the first paperback edition.

The 1982 reprint edition is included because it was submitted to the BNB and has its own BNB number. Correspondence with the BNB has indicated it is the same as the original edition. I am not sure why it would have been submitted again. It also illustrates that having a unique BNB number does not always signify a different edition of a book.

A001.05 Puffin mini edition, 1992

Publication Details: Puffin Books (28 May 1992) First thus edition.

Format: mini Paperback

Illustrations: Spike Milligan

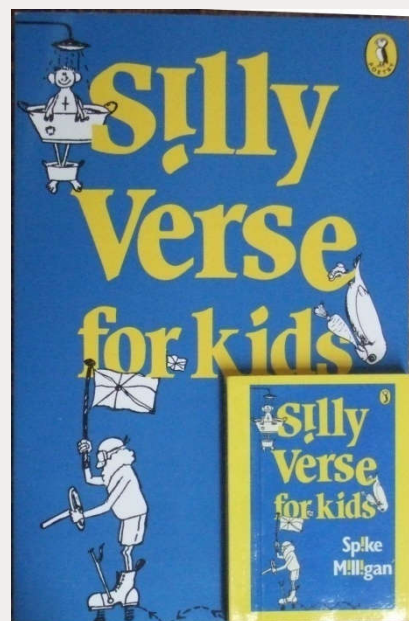
Cover design: Sonia Alexis

Identifier: Does not have its own ISBN. ISBN for the boxed set is 978-0140347302, BNB number for boxed set is GB9411432.

Physical Description: 80 pp, 80 x 60 x 6 mm, 26 gm.

This miniature edition was one of three volumes, *Silly Verse for Kids*, *Book of Milliganimals*, *Unspun Socks from a Chicken's Laundry*, in a boxed set published by Puffin in 1992.

This mini edition contains all the poems that are in the paperback edition bar one, 'A Thousand Hairy Savages'. The poems run in the same order, some of the longer poems are over more pages than in the full size editions.



A001.06 Puffin impression, 2005

Publication Details: Puffin Books (1 December 2005) (Amazon UK)

Format: B format paperback (You will see from the dimensions it is slightly larger than the previous paperback edition.)

Cover design: Sonia Alexis

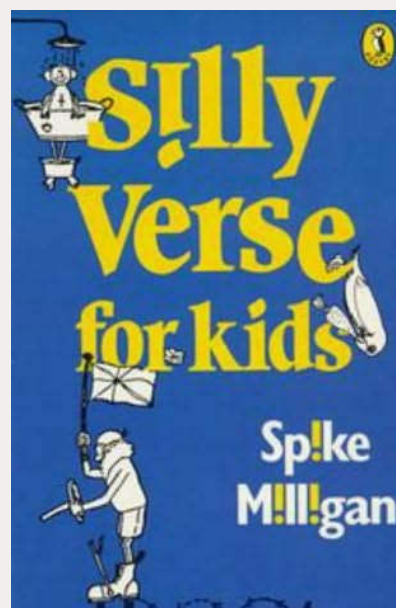
Illustrations: Spike Milligan

Identifier: ISBN-10: 0140303316 ISBN-13: 978-0140303315

Physical Description: 66pp (69p), 198 x 129 x 6 mm

The cover design of the 1992 miniature edition has been scaled up and used for this edition.

The Poem, A Thousand hairy savages and its illustration has also been removed from this edition. I suspect it may have been because the illustration was considered not politically correct. It is hard to imagine Spike agreeing to the omission for this reason.



A001.07 Puffin impression, 2015

Publication Details: Puffin Books (1 October 2015)

Format: B format paperback

Cover design: Spike Milligan, Peter Strain

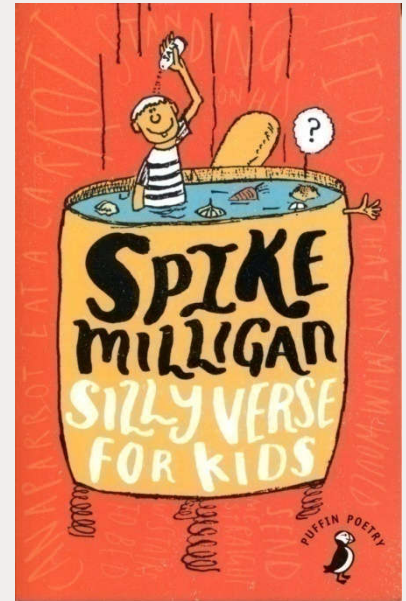
Illustrations: Spike Milligan plus

Identifier: ISBN-10: 0141362987 ISBN-13: 978-0141362984

BNB: GBB5A2417

Physical Description: 58pp, ill., 198 x 128 x 6 mm, 65 g.

Publication price: £6.99



Physical Descriptions

You probably will have noticed that each book's physical description is written with maybe unfamiliar abbreviations. I have largely used the standard library catalogue notations and the reader may have to use my Glossary at the back of the book to make sense of some entries.

This is one of the hazards of trying to present a formal bibliography and a accessible text for the general reader in the one publication.

Amazon references

Publication dates found at Amazon vary widely; they vary from parent website, Amazon.com, to many national websites. Amazon.co.uk, Amazon.ca, Amazon.fr and so on. Often it represents when the book was released in that country. Where I have used an Amazon publication date it is from the UK Amazon site, Amazon.co.uk