

world

Larger-than-life bear now an international star

United Press International
LONDON — Paddington Bear, that furry figure in a duffle coat and surplus hat who arrived in England from "darkest Peru" and took his name from a railroad station, just turned 21.

But in books he remains 9, the age he's been since his Aunt Lucy — now spending her twilight years in a home for retired bears in Lima — packed him aboard the train in South America with a handwritten brown tag around his neck saying "Please look after this bear."

Paddington, the most famous member of his species since President Theodore Roosevelt inspired the Teddy Bear (1902) and A. A. Milne created Winnie-the-Pooh (1926), is part of virtually every British child's life. His adventures are chronicled in more than a dozen books and a cartoon television series, and his stuffed, chubby persona

peers out from toy counters everywhere — along with countless Paddington "spinoffs."

Princess Anne, when she left the hospital with her baby son, Peter, carried a stuffed Paddington under one arm.

He also is becoming a celebrity in the United States. Romper Room has just bought the Paddington television series and sales of stuffed Paddingtons are booming, along with library and school requests for his books.

What makes him so popular? "He's reliable," says creator Michael Bond. "He has his paws firmly on the ground. He has a strong sense of right and wrong, in a way that a lot of people would like to have. You can talk to him and know he's not going to pass on your secrets."

The line between Paddington and Bond is, the author acknowledges, loosely drawn.

Bond, 53, a genial, silver-haired bear of a man, describes Paddington as, "More what I would like to be than I am. The Browns — with whom Paddington lives — are very much my mother and father. His environment is a pre-war, safe one, as I knew it from childhood. He wears those clothes because I was wearing a duffle coat and army surplus hat when I started to write about him."

The way Paddington and Bond, a former TV cameraman, first met is another story. "It was Christmas Eve and raining," Bond said. "I missed the bus and went into a department store for shelter. There was one bear left on the shelf and I felt sorry for it, so I bought it as a stocking stuffer. And because we lived near Paddington Station, I called it Paddington. And one day I decided to write a

story about him."

In little more than two decades, Paddington has grown into an international enterprise that brings in \$4 million in gross sales annually.

Since Paddington has been translated into 20 languages, Bond's correspondence comes from children — and adults — around the world.

Each gets a personal reply, often including a pawprint and line from

Paddington who signs himself "Paddington," since, being only 9 and a bear, he hasn't yet mastered spelling.

"I write to please myself," says Bond, who has completed a book about a guinea pig named Olga the Polga and will publish one about an armadillo named J. D. Polson who becomes president of the United States.

"I don't write for children and I don't think about children when I'm writing, because I don't think you can come up with a composite child to write for anyway."

To a child, Paddington often overshadows the real world outside his books.

Bond said one youngster told him he thought it was very funny to name a railway station after a bear.

Pollution-plagued Athens plans clean-up

United Press International
ATHENS, Greece — Athens goes into the 1980s with a brave new plan designed to save the city from disastrous overcrowding and pollution.

About 3.7 million Greeks, close to 40 percent of the country's population, live in the capital. Every day some 50 families arrive from the provinces or islands, usually to join relatives already established in the metropolis.

"Our goal is to stem the growth of Athens and stabilize its population at 4.5 million by the end of the century," said Undersecretary of Public Works Stephanos Manos, who commissioned the scheme.

"We have to decentralize by making other cities attractive and by creating sub-centers within the greater Athens area. At the moment all services are in the middle of the city and the traffic problem is horrendous."

Three-quarters of Greece's industry is concentrated around Athens along with all government offices, 70 percent of doctors and half of the country's privately-owned cars.

Trees, parks and playgrounds make up only 3 percent of the Athens area. Tall apartment blocks tower above narrow streets choked with traffic. A recent survey showed the city is one of the world's noisiest, threatening the psychological health of Athenians.

Under the new plan, vehicles are barred from certain districts, notably the Plaka, the old quarter beneath the Acropolis, and hundreds of new-

ly-planted trees line the sidewalks. In the spring, giant neon signs will come off buildings along a central boulevard so that passers-by can enjoy the splendor of neo-classical architecture.

"These are good things, but the plan has to provide more than cosmetic changes, and parts of it are just Utopian," said Costas Gartzos, an architect and one of 30 Greek city planners who have joined forces to work on the new scheme.

"We have to consider people's basic social needs in housing, recreation and waste disposal, and we have to make sure the government understands."

Pollution control may play a decisive role in the future of Athens, Gartzos said. There now is so much

sulphur dioxide from central heating systems and vehicle exhausts in the air that the marble surface of the Acropolis temples has begun to crumble. Last fall that Caryatids, 2,400-years-old stone maidens from the Erechtheum temple, had to be moved into a museum for protection from the atmosphere.

In winter a low lying brown smog covers the city, provoking comparisons with Los Angeles.

"The smog contains a nasty mix of nitrogen dioxide, hydrocarbons and organic particles, a distinct health hazard, especially for people with bronchial troubles," said Panayotis Christodoulakis, an environmental scientist.

About two-thirds of the city's sewage flows untreated into the sea, along with its industrial waste, some of it containing cadmium, lead and carcinogenic oils, he said.

"The fish have moved out of the Saronic Gulf because there is no oxygen left to breathe. And swimming in polluted water gives fair-skinned northern tourists skin diseases."

The new plan calls for a British-designed sewage treatment plant and strict zoning laws to curb new industry around Athens. A new subway, costing nearly \$1 billion, and roads costing \$2 billion will handle the traffic problem, the government hopes, although transportation improvements in Athens usually run into trouble from archaeologists.

Athenians themselves will help defray the cost of rescuing the city through new taxes on real estate, services and licenses for shops and businesses, now under study.

But cynics recall that the only plans ever carried out were Periclean rebuilding after the 450 B.C. Persian invasion, the Roman Emperor Hadrian's enlargement of the city he admired, and King Otto of Bavaria's scheme for the capital of newly-independent Greece in the 1830s.

"It's up to the Athenians in the end," Gartzos said. "They have to react and demand specific improvements in the quality of their lives if the city is to remain inhabitable."

Owner commits suicide after her celebrity dog dies

United Press International
ROTHERHAM, England — Mrs. Cynthia Harrison apparently could not live without her shaggy English sheepdog, Digby, a television star.

She also became a celebrity when Digby captured the hearts of millions of Britons in paint commercials on television.

She was invited with Digby to open shopping centers and supermarkets, to receptions and parties. She even took Digby to meet Queen Elizabeth and Prince Philip.

But Digby died unexpectedly at the age of 7 and Mrs. Harrison, her life of glamor over, was shattered.

Just before Christmas, 14 months after Digby's death, the 46-year-old woman was found dead in her automobile after taking a massive dose of sleeping pills.

"It was a very sudden blow, and she took it very badly," her husband, Norman Harrison, told an inquest Friday. "The dog's death was a shock and her life changed considerably afterwards."

February eclipse to be studied for effects on Earth

United Press International
WASHINGTON — A total eclipse of the sun will be visible in parts of Africa and the Indian Ocean Feb. 16, and the federal space agency says it plans to launch seven sounding rockets to study it.

The rockets, to be fired from the San Marco launch platform in the Indian Ocean off Kenya, will study the solar corona while the sun's disc is blacked out and also will examine changes in Earth's upper atmosphere during the eclipse.

Five of the rockets will carry scientific instruments provided by Pennsylvania State University and two will carry payloads from the Los Alamos, N.M., scientific laboratories.

The San Marco station will be in the path of the total eclipse for about 10 minutes. The rockets will be fired before, during and after the eclipse.

The eclipse's path will begin off the west coast of Africa during the early morning of Feb. 16 and move in an easterly direction, crossing Zaire, Tanzania and southern Kenya.

According to the Yearbook of Astronomy, the path of totality will go across the Arabian Sea and southern India and end in southern China.

This will be the only total eclipse of the sun this year.

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