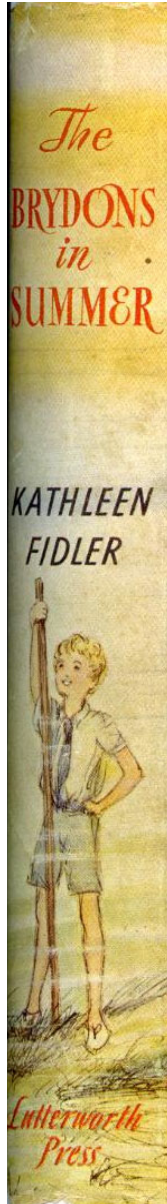




Ripping Reads No 57 May 2026

Kathleen Fidler and The Brydons
by Jill Ashmore



Every year I treat myself to one of Jan Johnson's wonderful Christmas Mystery Boxes, and I thoroughly enjoy opening the beautifully wrapped books in the prescribed order. When I opened one of them from the 2025 box I knew who the author was as soon as I saw the front cover illustration of six children followed by one adult cycling down a hill. It was one of the 19 books about the Brydons and friends: Roger, Ruth, Simon, Susan, Dan, his friend Sam and Miss Marsden, known as Marsdie.

The Brydons' mother was a surgeon in a hospital in the country, and the children lived in a house next to it with Marsdie. The books sometimes take place there, and some of them are set in the places where they go on holiday. The one I had this time was *The Brydons on the Broads*. The five children, their friend Dan, Marsdie and Mrs Hallam (the housekeeper at the hospital) have been lent an eight berth cruiser on the Norfolk Broads and they are able to go away for two weeks. They have to learn how to manage the boat and there is a mystery to be solved.

I enjoy books in which you learn about something through the story as it occurs naturally, so for instance I learnt about sailing and the Lake District through Arthur Ransome's books. *The Brydons on the Broads* includes information about the Broads which I already knew about from Ransome's *Coot Club*. The Brydons also tells of the visit to St Helen's church, known as 'The Cathedral of the

