

# EAST Northumberland



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## Of robins, phoebes, owls and chickadees

By JOYCE SURMAN

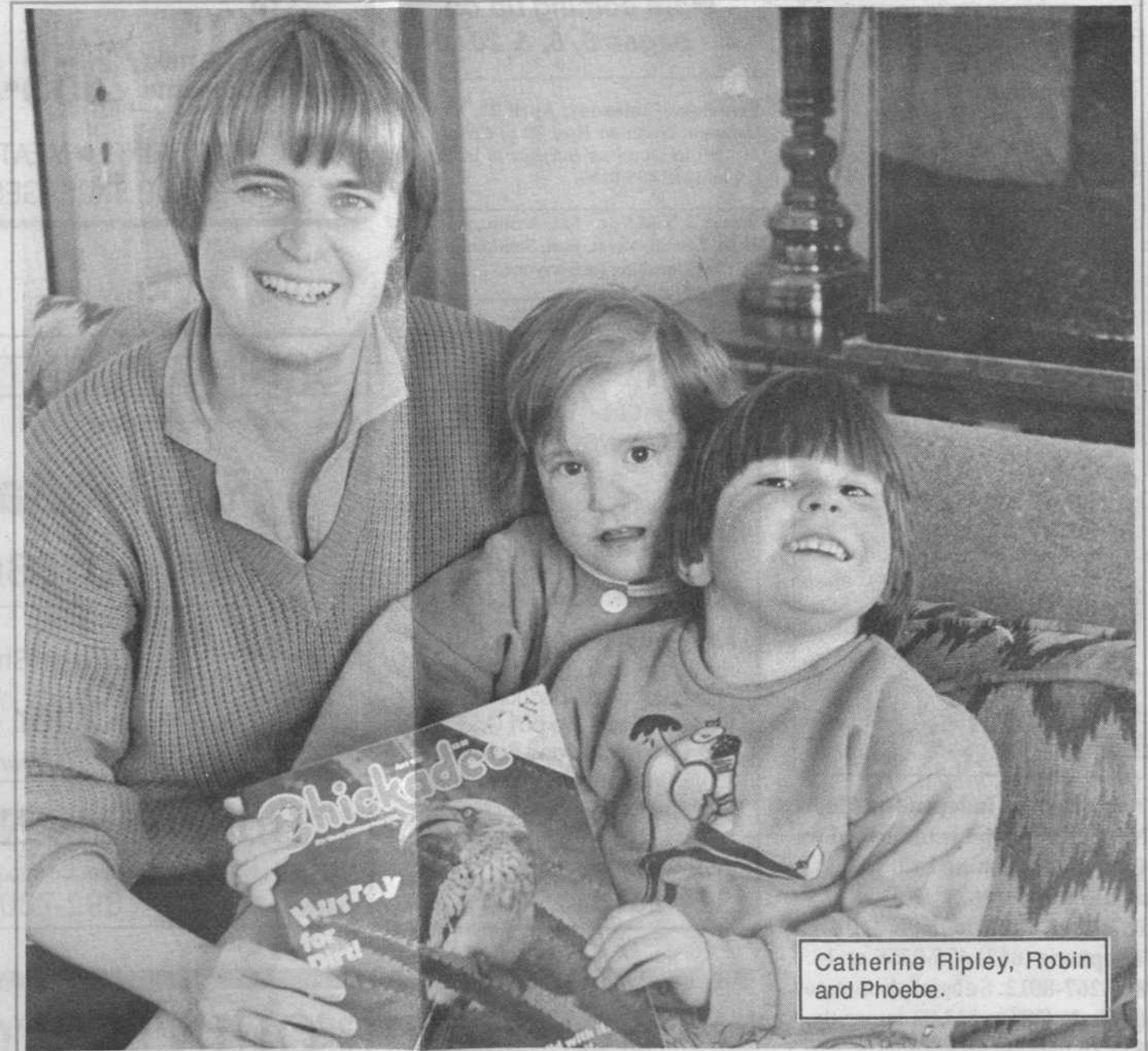
*To a lesser or greater degree, birds are important to most of us and when we hear names such as Robin, Phoebe, Owl and Chickadee, images of those birds will come readily to mind. Appearances can be deceiving however, and in this case the names are not what they seem. For these birds, the common denominator is free-lance writer Catherine Ripley of Wicklow and they represent a very significant part of her daily life. For the answers to our small teaser, read on.*

'Robin' is Cathy's youngest daughter, a two-year-old charmer, and 'Phoebe' is a four-year-old larger version, both full of fun and mischief. There's also seven-year-old Owen (and we could stretch credibility and say that the first two letters of his name almost say 'Owl'), older brother of the previously mentioned pair. As for 'Owl' and 'Chickadee', they are not children or birds, but magazines whose names are familiar to children across the land, with a combined circulation of over 300,000, in both French and English.

Cathy is not only a busy mother, she's the editor of 'Chickadee' which is specifically designed for youngsters of three to eight/nine, while 'Owl' is a science and nature publication for the nine to twelve age-group. Both magazines are multi-award winners, carry no advertising and are published by the Young Naturalists Foundation established in 1975.

### DIFFERENCE A TRAIN MAKES

Because 'Chickadee' is published in Toronto, Cathy must commute between the city and home, which isn't as easy as it



Catherine Ripley, Robin and Phoebe.

once was.

"I used to be able to go daily by early train from Cobourg but that train isn't in service any more and I'm only one of many who really miss it," she says ruefully. "I tried car-pooling to Whitby for about eight months and going in from

there, but it was just too much. Now, I catch a later morning train at 10:30 am on Tuesdays, which gets me to work about noon, stay over Tuesday and Wednesday and come home Thursday night.

The loss of that particular train has meant a big adjustment for the family but

Bruce and I share the responsibility by each taking over when the other one is away."

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