



Letter from John Greenaway to Mr Flack, giving the University of Nottingham a selection of his sister's sketches in honour of her affection for Nottinghamshire, from *Kate Greenaway Album* (1933) Special Collection Over.XX NC242.G7 barcode 6004590274



A bee mistakes fabric flowers on Dolinda's hat for real flowers and pulls them out in disgust when he realises the truth. Nora Lavrin, *Dolinda's Ride* (undated, mid twentieth century) ACC 2866 Box 3

## In a Land Not Far, Far Away

From the earliest pioneers to some of the most significant authors and illustrators, Nottinghamshire has had a strong connection to children's literature which continues today.

Children's books were originally sparsely illustrated by rough woodcuts, if there were any pictures at all. Thomas Bewick, the eighteenth century artist and printmaker, revived the technique of wood engraving. This made a huge contribution to book illustration as a whole, but proved particularly important for children's literature. Unlike previous methods, a wood engraving block could be used alongside the text blocks, rather than added in later. The technique used to create the blocks made them more durable and more detailed than previous methods. Overall, it made the process cheaper and improved the quality of the images.

There was a huge appetite for illustrated books, and advertisers took care to mention if a work was illustrated, particularly if the illustrations were in colour. In London, and probably elsewhere, working class children were employed to add colour to the pages of cheap books for their richer peers to enjoy. By the end of the nineteenth century, it was possible to earn a living from children's illustrations, and for them to be mass produced without exploiting the labour of their target audience.

Once freed from what could be engraved onto a wooden block, the style of illustrations became limited only by the artists' imaginations. The spindly, slightly menacing characters and silhouettes of Arthur Rackham and the cherubic children romping through idyllic English countryside drawn by Kate Greenaway were equally popular.



Frontispiece and title page from 'Stories of Stapleford' signed by the author Mary Howitt Mary Howitt, *Stories of Stapleford* (London, 1864) East Midlands Special Collection Not 1.W8 HOW/MY barcode 6001695885



The region continues to produce successful children's authors and illustrators. Carol Adlam began her career in the East Midlands and has been Artist-In-Residence at Nottingham Lakeside Arts, was commissioned by Nottingham Castle Museum and Galleries as part of their WWI commemorations, and teaches Children's Book Illustration and Graphic Novel Illustration at Nottingham Trent University. Illustration © Carol Adlam