The Bodleian Library is home to the Iona and Peter Opie Collection of Children’s Books, one of the largest and most important collection of children’s books in the English language. In addition, it has been entitled to receive a copy of every book published in Britain since 1602. From this vast collection, Bodleian Children’s Books publishes forgotten classics of children’s literature.

The titles are distributed worldwide through our network of agents and distributors. Language rights in a number of our titles are available, as indicated.

All titles are chosen for their superb illustrations, engaging stories and their suitability for children today. We strive to produce handsome hardback gift editions with special emphasis on colour reproduction and high quality paper and bindings. We hope soon to begin commissioning new illustrated titles with a connection to reading, literacy and books. These too will be produced to a high standard as quality gift editions.

This story is about a brave and kind Anglo-Saxon princess called Frideswide who lived in Oxford a long time ago and just happened to be brilliant at climbing very tall trees. Her talent came in useful one day when a wicked king tried to kidnap her. How did she and her friends escape, and what happened to the king and his soldiers?

With stunning illustrations by award-winning artist Alan Marks, Saint Frideswide’s legend is retold for young children as a tale of adventure, courage in the face of danger, friendship and kindness, with a few surprises along the way.

The church Frideswide founded in Oxford was on the site of what is now Christ Church, and the princess’s medieval shrine can still be seen inside the Cathedral.

This beautiful picture book is sure to be treasured by any child who loves tales of adventure. It will appeal to children learning about the Anglo-Saxons, to readers who like feisty heroes and to visitors to Oxford, as a meaningful souvenir of their visit.

The lovely name Frideswide is a compound of two Anglo-Saxon words meaning peace (frith) and strong (swith). And these are the qualities at the heart of this most appealing retelling of the legend of the resourceful girl who outfaced danger, chose the path of peace, and worked great wonders.

Kevin Crossley-Holland

I would highly recommend this captivating tale to anyone from eight to eighty.

Korky Paul

JACKIE HOLDERNESS is currently the Cathedral Education Officer at Christ Church, Oxford. She has written and published a wide range of educational books and materials. ALAN MARKS has illustrated children’s books for several decades, including winners of the Carnegie Medal and the Smarties Prize.
The Hungry Goat

Alan Mills
Illustrated by Abner Graboff

When he was young
He was so small,
You’d hardly think
He ate at all.
But he ate so much,
It was a fright!
No one could touch
His appetite!
All day he chewed
And chewed and chewed,
For all he saw
He thought was food.
He nibbled grass,
And other things
Like paper bags,
And bits of strings,

ABNER GRABOFF was a prolific graphic designer and children’s book illustrator, active from the 1950s to the 1970s.

The (very) hungry goat has a big appetite which gets him into all kinds of adventures. He’ll eat anything, from pig swill to frying pans and even barbed wire. As a result he grows fatter and fatter until one day he gobbles up something that sends him on the biggest adventure of all.

Abner Graboff’s timeless illustrations bring this greedy animal to life in a comic rhyming tale for younger children.

What Can Cats Do?

Abner Graboff

There are many things cats can do which children can’t, such as lap up milk and use their tongues as combs. There are also a number of things that cats can’t do, like sing children to sleep, or get down from trees …

Abner Graboff combines the voice of childhood innocence with a wonderful sense of fun in his quirky book about the mysteries of cats and their secret lives, told from the point of view of a young child. Playful and bold illustrations complement the simple text, inspired by a much-loved family feline.

ABNER GRABOFF was a prolific graphic designer and children’s book illustrator, active from the 1950s to the 1970s. His three sons helped him to research this book by studying their cat, Tarzan.
The Rain Puddle

There was an Old Lady

Who has fallen into the rain puddle? Is it plump hen, turkey gobbler, curly sheep or beautiful fat pig? When all the animals peer into the puddle at the same time, they see the entire farmyard underwater. Off they run to get help. Meanwhile, the hot sun shines down and wise owl chuckles to himself.

This charming tale – ideal for reading out loud – captures perfectly the wonder of discovering the outside world for the first time.

One day an old lady swallows a fly and the only way she can get rid of it is to swallow a wriggling, tickling spider …

For over a century this subversive rhyme has delighted children and parents alike. Its galloping rhythm is perfect for reading out loud, becoming a memory game as the list of animals – bird, cat, dog, goat – grows. Graboff’s bright and startling illustrations combine beautifully with the traditional verse to bring this classic tale to life.

ADELAIDE HOLL is a well-known writer and illustrator of over forty children’s books. She has served as a writer and educational consultant for the Artists and Writers Press in New York as well as editor for Random House.

ROGER DUVOISIN was a renowned Swiss-born American author-illustrator who created the Happy Lion and Petunia series of picture books, along with more than forty other titles for children. He was awarded the Caldecott Medal in 1947.

ABNER GRABOFF was a highly prolific artist and children’s book illustrator, active from the 1950s to the 1970s.
A is for all of us – everyone, playing, learning, having fun.

This beautifully illustrated alphabet book is perfect for children starting at nursery for the first time. Bright, animated pictures designed around each letter show children happily playing: building with bricks, sifting sand, listening to stories, singing, dancing and riding on the rocking horse. The accompanying rhyming text is ideal for reading out loud. Gentle guidance is combined with a number of fun and imaginative words for each letter: g is for giggling, p is for please, s is for sharing, t is for tickling and y, of course, is for yippee.

All creatures sleep in their own way, from bears hibernating in caves, to horses standing in fields and seals stretched out on their flippers. This charming bedtime book explores the different ways animals slumber, from familiar pets like cats and dogs, cozy in their baskets, to the less well-known cricket and moth. Charlotte Zolotow’s gentle and timeless language combines with exquisite illustrations by Vladimir Bobri to create a calm, comforting text that is the perfect precursor to nodding off.

CHARLOTTE ZOLOTOW was a children’s picture book author, poet and book editor. In a career spanning fifty years she wrote over ninety books for children and edited hundreds of children’s books.

VLADIMIR BOBRI was an author, illustrator and artist, celebrated for his design work. From the 1940s he began to illustrate children’s books, a number of which have now become classics.
What is Red?
Suzanne Gottlieb
Illustrated by Vladimir Bobri

Little Jonny ponders the meaning of colours as he explores the landscape. He dips his toes in a blue brook, picks purple flowers, digs brown earth and finds an enormous orange pumpkin. Finally yellow sunlight and the black night show him when it is time to get up and when it is time to go to sleep.

The vibrant primary colours of Vladimir Bobri’s illustrations, together with a simple narrative, which follows the natural rhythm of the seasons, make this a stunning and enduring colours book for young children.

SUZANNE GOTTLIEB was active in many progressive causes and director of an interracial and intercultural summer camp for children from diverse economic backgrounds.

VLADIMIR BOBRI was an author, illustrator and artist, celebrated for his design work. From the 1940s he began to illustrate children’s books, a number of which have now become classics.

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What is Round?
Blossom Budney
Illustrated by Vladimir Bobri

Many things in the natural world are round – the moon, the sun, a nest, a bubble. And so are many delicious things to eat – a ball of ice cream, a doughnut, a pie. And so too are more decorative objects such as a crown, a clock or a bauble on a Christmas tree. Through gentle verse this charming book, first published in the 1950s, explores a surprising range of items and sounds that come in round shapes. Striking and vibrant illustrations by Vladimir Bobri add humour and warmth to this joyful geometrical exploration for young children.

BLOSSOM BUDNEY was the author of many books for children including Huff Puff Hickory Hill, A Cat Can Count and My Pony, Joker.

VLADIMIR BOBRI was an author, illustrator and artist, celebrated for his design work. From the 1940s he began to illustrate children’s books, a number of which have now become classics.

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Veronica
Roger Duvoisin

Veronica the hippopotamus lives with her large family on the cool muddy river bank, swimming in its clear waters. But she is not happy. She dreams of becoming a conspicuous hippopotamus, even perhaps, a famous one, noticed by everyone.

So she sets off, looking for adventure. In the city she discovers that there are many confusing rules about how you can move around, where you can sleep and what you can eat, and that police stations are not made with hippopotamuses in mind. Will she find her way back to her safe, muddy home? And will her dream of becoming a conspicuous hippopotamus ever be realized?

One windy day a little boy happens upon a large black hat, lying in the street. When he tries it on, he becomes a whole host of different characters he’s always wanted to be: a soldier marching through the puddles, a cowboy galloping on his steed, a bandit fleeing in the night, or a ringleader at a circus. But when the owner comes to claim his hat, the little boy finds the March Wind before him. Is this part of his imagination too?

Vladimir Bobri’s timeless illustrations bring to life a magical childhood world in a captivating story about make-believe and the transformative power of the elements.

Roger Duvoisin was a renowned Swiss-born American author-illustrator who created the Happy Lion and Petunia series of picture books, along with more than 40 other titles for children. He was awarded the Caldecott medal in 1947.

Inez Rice was an American children’s author who also wrote A Tree This Tall.

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Whale's Way
Johanna Johnston
Illustrated by Leonard Weisgard

That is the way of the largest creature on earth. That is the whale's way.

The humpback whales journey through polar seas, diving, spouting and leaping. As winter comes they swim through treacherous waters towards the warmer climate of the equator. Will they escape the hunters and guide baby whale to safety?

Telling the story of the life cycle of the whale in a simple narrative, this is a beautifully illustrated book with timeless appeal.

All over the snow plain the penguins begin to sing. The eggs are beginning to arrive.

This is the story of the emperor penguins that live far away on the edge of a secret sea. During summer they are content with fishing, swimming and playing in the icy waters. But when the season changes, they must travel to the snowy lands around the South Pole. How will they and the newly hatched penguin chicks survive the icy winter? This is a delightful introduction to the natural world of the penguin, told in narrative form with beautiful, timeless illustrations.

Penguin's Way
Johanna Johnston
Illustrated by Leonard Weisgard

That is the way of the largest creature on earth.

JOHANNA JOHNSTON was a renowned children's author based in the USA. She also wrote scripts for radio, including for the long-running children's series Let's Pretend, as well as children's stories, retellings of myths and children's history.

LEONARD WEISGARD was an award-winning illustrator who published over 200 children's books. After studying illustration in New York he began a successful collaboration with the author Margaret Wise Brown as well as writing books of his own. He also worked with the American Library Association in the field of children's education.

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