



## Children's column - out of print, not out of mind

Nicolette Jones

Opinion - **Children** Friday, 28th November 2008

---

*Rumours (if exaggerated) that Houghton Mifflin was no longer commissioning struck fear into the hearts of authors, illustrators and agents everywhere. And yet though I would never recommend mainstream publishers doing only this children's publishers know there is a plus side to giving attention to what has already been published. All children's publishers have rolling programmes of re-jacketing and reissues, since with each passing year children grow into books they used not to be old enough for. Some houses already specialise in resurrecting the out-of-print, such as Jane Nissen Books, Barn Owl, and Catnip, which is increasingly good at discovering lost gems, including, recently, Berlie Doherty's Carnegie-winning *Granny Was a Buffer Girl* and, forthcoming, Joan Lingard's *The File on Fraulein Berg*. (Meanwhile there are still nine out-of-print Carnegie Medal winning novels to consider, including two of Jan Mark's.)*

And there seems to be a fashion for bringing back out-of-print picturebooks and illustrated books - for a nostalgic market, for those interested in the history of illustration, and to reintroduce the timeless. Orion has just republished *The Land of Nursery Rhyme* (1932) in which the quaint skill of the illustrations by Charles Folkard outweighs the datedness of some of the improving choices of rhymes among old favourites. Last year from OUP came Clarke Hutton's *A Picture History of Britain*, first out in 1945 and only a bit squeamish about, for example, Nell Gwyn and Mrs Simpson, both described as friends of royalty. It was followed up this year by Hutton's *A Picture History of Great Discoveries* (1954). In the summer Phaidon embraced 1960s classics with celebrated graphic designer Bob Gill's *A Balloon for a Blunderbuss* (1961) and *What Colour Is Your World?* (1967), and Jean-Jacques Semp's *Martin Pebble* (1969). This autumn Pavilion has brought back Ralph Steadman's *Fly Away Peter* (1967). And National Maritime Museum Publishing has revisited *Rotten Island* (1969) by William Steig (creator of *Shrek*). The brains of Martin Salisbury, of Anglia Ruskin's MA in Illustration at Cambridge, with his expertise in the history of 20th-century illustration, would be worth picking for more artists not to be lost.

A word of warning, however. Egmont did wonders in 2006 by republishing Brian Wildsmith's deserving and innovatory picturebooks, including his Greenaway-winning *ABC* (1962) and *Jungle Party* (1974). Though published in the US by Star Bright Books, both are now out of print in the UK again.

And now, don't all rush at once: *Phoebe and the Hot Water Bottles*, by Terry Furchgott (Picture Lions 1980), goes for between £30 and £120 in paperback when copies come up on eBay.

Source article: <https://www.bookbrunch.co.uk/page/article-detail/childrens-column-out-of-print-not-out-of-mind>