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Rees-Williams Collection

Originally collected by James Rees-Williams, a former York St John Librarian in the 1970s, this eclectic collection of historic children's books consists of over 3000 volumes dating from c1780 to the 1920s.

The collection is interesting because it does not focus on the well-known 'classics' of children's literature but covers a wide spectrum of adventure yarns, improving tales, annuals and now long-forgotten stories.



The majority of books are children's fiction. However, a number are early text books, as well as fables and fairy tales, adventure yarns, nursery stories, religious and instructive works, annuals, and historical and biographical books. They represent a wide ranging picture of the writing for children in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

There are many well-known authors included in the collection including Mrs Molesworth, Mrs Sherwood, [Lewis Carroll](#), [J. M. Barrie](#), Charles Kingsley, Jules Verne, Robert Ballantyne, W. H. G. Kingston, Charlotte Yonge, Hesba Stretton, and [G. A. Henty](#).



The Religious Tract Society publications are well represented, along with other important publishing houses of the day such as Nelson, Frederick Warne, Routledge, Shaw, and Blackie. There is an extensive collection of annuals – Chums, Boy's Own, Girl's Own, Little Folks, Chatterbox.

Most of the books have decorated covers, are attractively bound and contain illustrations by artists, including those of the stature of [Arthur Rackham](#), [Randolph Caldecott](#), [Kate Greenaway](#) and [Walter Crane](#). They in generally very good condition, and retain their original colours.

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The collection has valuable research potential for postgraduate and scholarly work focusing on the literary and social history of childhood. It has been developed as a learning and teaching resource for undergraduate studies in children's literature as part of the University's Learning and Teaching Development. It is housed in Fountains Learning Centre at York St John University, York.

Please contact [Lottie Alexander](#) for an appointment if you would like to visit the Collection.

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