

**Illustrators of Alice** Alice Liddell recalled that Carroll took his drawing as seriously as his photography.\* He went on trying to improve his figure drawing until the end of his life. When writing the manuscript of *Alice's\* Adventures Under Ground*,\* Carroll prepared the whole book for Alice, page layout, text and illustrations. These have their own strong character, particularly displaying Alice's discomfort. (See also Dress.\*)

When the idea of publication was put forward, Carroll was not considered competent to illustrate the book himself, even though he had been the first illustrator of *Alice*. He had tried to improve his style with tutors and had powerful visual ideas, as was clear to members of the MacDonald\* family. He may have drawn partly on Edward Lear's ideas for his own line drawings, particularly for Father William\*, but he had little of Lear's facility. He eventually chose Tenniel\* who brought professionalism to the project, although Tenniel missed the frenetic feeling which Carroll caught. Carroll resented this.

The sequence of four illustrations of the ballad of *Father William* demonstrates that Carroll's line drawings are odder but flatter. Tenniel's are more jocular and more competent. There is no doubt that the *Alice* texts flowered in Tenniel's hands and that their greatness owes a lot to him. There are at least three accounts of what is known of Tenniel's relationship with Carroll:

Edward Hodnett, *Image and Text; Studies in the illustration of English literature* (Scolar Press, 1982);

Rodney Engen, *Sir John Tenniel, Alice's White Knight*, a biography of Tenniel (Scolar Press, 1991);

Michael Hancher, *The Tenniel Illustrations to the 'Alice' Books* (Macmillan, 1986), which analyses Tenniel's *Alice* sources.

What made *Alice* a particular challenge to illustrators in his own day was the knowledge that Carroll had strong feelings about page layout\* and the content of the illustrations. He was not a writer who wrote a text and left the rest to others. The strength of his feelings about detail drove Tenniel to refuse to work with him again – and to warn other illustrators to stay well clear of him.

In the twentieth century, illustrators of *Alice* have taken many liberties with Carroll's concepts. The ending of the copyright of *Wonderland* in 1907 meant that there was a rush by publishers to cash in on its popularity. (*Looking-Glass*, because of changes in the law, remained in copyright until 1948, 50 years after Carroll's death.) In 1972, Graham Ovenden, himself an illustrator of *Alice*, compiled a catalogue, with John Davis as commentator, *The Illustrators of Alice in Wonderland and Through the Looking-Glass*. This listed 90 of the illustrators of English language editions of *Wonderland*.

A further 21 illustrators were cited by Ovenden as illustrators of the *Looking-Glass* story, and 33 more for editions where both *Alice* stories were published in one volume. In France, *Visages d'Alice* (1983) – catalogue of an exhibition at the Pompidou Centre, Paris – was compiled by Jean Verame. (See also Translators\* of *Alice*.)

The illustrator of *Alice* has to decide whether to retain a Victorian, English image of Alice, and whether to (as Ralph Steadman did with conspicuous success – see below) include the image of Carroll himself among the characters. The American illustrator, Willy Pogany, whose edition was published in 1929, drew a 1920s *Alice* with boyishly parted hair, a short check skirt and plain button shoes, the sort of pre-prep look of the privately educated American girl. Max Ernst, in his *Lewis Carroll's Wunderhorn* (Stuttgart, 1970) engraved plates in which she appears as a late Victorian German child with short, frilled sleeves, a low cut dress and a long skirt.

Besides the question of dress, illustrators of *Alice* have to choose how grotesque the characters should be. Scale is another problem: how large or small should Alice be in relation to those around her? What follows are notes on the illustrative ideas of Rackham, Laurençin, Mespoulet, Peake, Steadman, Blake and Mass...



Alice by Arthur Rackham



Alice by Blanche McManus

ARTHUR RACKHAM (1867–1939) Arthur Rackham's *Wonderland* was published in 1907. Tinted in browns and rusty reds, Rackham's dimly-lit full-page illustrations have a disturbing way of penetrating Carroll's text

without dominating it. Rackham excelled at depicting a world where gnarled trees and swirling vegetation bear down on supernatural characters. He brought this landscape to the task of illustrating *Alice*. Rackham's landscape is a 'Wonderland', not the English countryside portrayed by Tenniel, and is closer perhaps to the German or Scandinavian children's book tradition than to the English. The difficulty with Rackham's *Alice* watercolour and line illustrations is that they are always Rackham, defying Carroll's text rather than interpreting it.



MARIE LAURENÇIN (1883–1956) Laurençin illustrated *Alice* in a series of lithographs for the Black Sun Press edition of *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (1930). She emphasized the lyricism of Carroll's work. Alice, in Laurençin's plates, is a serene dream-child, with the fragility and abstraction of a Sèvres

porcelain shepherdess. Laurençin's *Alice* thus lacks the occasional horror of Carroll's and Tenniel's originals. Her coloured lithographs, in black, blue, red and green line, are celebratory and pastoral. This Alice wears a tartan skirt and floats over green grass and blue water, her hand laid trustingly in her sister's lap.

Laurençin's dream-child with a long ribbon twined through her hair is little known to Anglo-Saxon commentators, though recognized as the work of an artist of major importance by Japanese art-lovers. Contemporary with Laurençin, was Marie Mespoulet.

MARIE MESPOULET (active in 1930s) While professor of French literature at Columbia University, she wrote a book about illustrators of *Alice* called *Creators of Wonderland*. It was dedicated to E. O'Keefe and was published, like Laurençin's Black Sun edition of *Alice*, close to the centennial of Carroll's birth.



Alice by Peter Newell

On Christmas Eve, 1938, before the fall of France, she sent a copy of her book to Miss da Costa Greene at the Pierpoint Morgan Library in New York. It was published by the Rydall Press, Santa Fé, New Mexico. With this gift, which she presented as 'an elegant thimble'; she sent the following note:

I have read about everything you have done to honour the art and thought of France. May I, in return, beg of you to accept this little book, which intertwines English and French fantasies?

Mespoulet proposed, and sustained her argument with skill:

Have not Alice's mid-Victorian animals, and with them all of the Wonderland and Looking-Glass books, a flavour of an earlier generation? Do they not, however strikingly and delightfully English, partly belong to mid-nineteenth century Europe?

By Europe, Mespoulet meant France, and by France, she meant the graphic art of J. J. Grandville,\* one of the most original graphic artists of his day. *Charivari* was Thackeray's source for the English *Punch*.\* Grandville's vignettes, proposed Mespoulet, inspired many of Tenniel's compositions for *Alice* – for example the scene where Alice lends her thimble to the Dodo,\* a scene based on Grandville's *Guillemot's Wedding*. Other masquerading animals, including Tenniel's *Mock Turtle*\* also overlap with Grandville's zoomorphs\*.

Before and after the Second World War, two of the most mysterious illustrators to be inspired by *Alice* were Balthus\* and Mervyn Peake.

MERVYN PEAKE (1911–68) Peake made his (Stockholm, 1946) *Alice* period-less in her dress. His *Alice* shared the charm and innocence of Laurençin's. In contrast, his characters have a comic sense about them that caught the ironic

spirit of Carroll's drawing, which eluded Tenniel. His picture of the bespectacled and snooty Sheep is particularly effective. His Hatter\* has a strange insouciance.

RALPH STEADMAN (1936– ) Steadman completed a full set of black line illustrations for *Wonderland* in 1967 and *Looking-Glass* in 1977, and is one of Carroll's most passionate twentieth-century exponents. In 1977, he illustrated *The Wasp\* in a Yellow Wig* in colour after its first publication. His work is disliked by some Anglo-American commentators on *Alice*. Although Steadman is one of the outstanding cartoonists and illustrators to re-interpret Tenniel's plates, his inclusion of the figure of Carroll in many of his most elaborate illustrations, as in the chessboard scene in *Looking-Glass*, distressed traditionalist lovers of Carroll's work (though not the authors) as did his accolade to Carroll's genius: 'My only regret is that I didn't write the story'.

More grotesque in his approach, they are so grotesque they lose sight of the foolish fallibility of Carroll's characters.

Steadman noted in 1972 that his instinct had been to follow Carroll's technique of portraying characters he knew personally when he devised the adult characters in *Alice*, an interpretation he shared with William Empson\* and Shane Leslie:\*

The animals [I drew for *Alice*] remind me of people I know, rather as Lewis Carroll apparently created them around friends and associates.

Steadman gave a political edge to Carroll's *Alice* and updated its relevance to his day. His *Jabbenvoocky*,\* for example, updated Tenniel's by having a Union Jack clamped on to its tongue and atomic bomb mushroom clouds steaming from its ears. A vulnerable-looking modern boy in pyjamas tries to resist it. The impact is that of a twentieth-century political cartoonist unwilling to draw a veil over dire totalitarian challenges, rather than a children's book illustrator. Steadman was awarded the Black Humour Award in France in 1986.

**PETER BLAKE (1932-)** Blake designed a series of coloured screen prints for *Alice* starting in 1970. A painter rather than book illustrator in the accepted sense, his extraordinary pictures inspired by Carroll's text (not Tenniel's line illustrations) created flesh tones for Alice that give the impression of a Victorian studio photograph that has been tinted. Such tones, with their claustrophobic Victorian glow, Carroll commissioned for several photographs of child\*-friends, with parental permission.

Peter Blake's *Alice* is a truly 1970s little girl of seven. She is an untidy modern child caught unaware in a noisy primary school playground, an urban, not a pastoral child.

Elsewhere Blake re-interpreted pictures of Old Masters set in a contemporary location, sometimes in California. His art has a cunning effect of forcing the viewer to look freshly at old images. Blake's Hatter in prison has attached to his foot a Victorian ball and chain. Yet his shoes are contemporary, as is his red enamel prison-issue tea mug. Each of Blake's screen prints has a caption copied from *Alice*, bearing Blake's signature and the date. It is Blake's Hatter and yet it makes the viewer rethink Carroll's and Tenniel's.

**BARRY MOSER (1940- )** Moser made 95 wood engravings for the distinguished Pennyroyal Press *Alice* (1981), which is built up from a series of major wood engravings, the central character being his own daughter at Alice's age. The plates are epic, sympathetic to the text, and disturbing, while still evoking the humanity inherent in Carroll's characters.

In his introduction to this American *Alice* James Kincaid (see Critics\*) noted:

The Red King may be dreaming Alice, but Carroll has the power to dream not only the Red King, but also his special 'dream Alice', even if the dreaming jokes squint self-protectively, and even if he is dreaming 'as the summers die'.

The illustrators of the *Alice* books have, over the years, been many. The focus here is on British editions but some notable other English Language editions are included. This is an attempt to list all the major illustrators of the *Alice* books from 1899 to 2011. In the main British editions are shown but where there are other publications of note these are also given.

*Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* was first published in 1865 but it was withdrawn as the illustrator, John Tenniel was not happy with the quality of the printing. The text blocks were sent to America where they were bound with a new title page and sold there. Up to 1907 Macmillan held the exclusive copyright of 'Alice's Adventures' in Britain and the Colonies. ('Through the Looking-Glass' copyright did not run out until 1948). When the copyright ran out many publishers took the opportunity to issue the *Alice* book with new illustrations and around 20 editions appeared in the following two years alone. The first artist, other than Tenniel, to produce illustrations for 'Alice' was Beatrix Potter in the 1890s, she created 6 illustrations but none appeared in book form.

In America, until 1891, publishers could reprint British books without the copyright restraint but from that date they had to get the agreement of the UK publishers and authors. As a result several US publishing houses issued copies of the *Alice* books with Tenniel illustrations.

McManus was the first to attempt the task of providing new illustrations for the books in 1899.

Blanche McManus, Mansfield & Wessels published 'Wonderland' in 1899, the first American edition with new illustrations. Both Alice books were published in a combined edition by them in 1900

Peter Newell, Alice published by Harper USA in 1901 & Looking-Glass in 1902

Maria L Kirk (& John Tenniel) Published by Stokes USA in 1904

Bessie Pease Gutmann, Alice 1st published by Dodge USA in 1907 & Looking-Glass in 1909. The 1st UK edition was by Milne in 1908.

Thomas Maybank, Published by Routledge in c1907/8

Millicent Sowerby, Published by Chatto & Windus in 1907.

Arthur Rackham, Published by Heinemann in 1907 in a Limited edition of 1.130 copies, a trade edition in a smaller format was also issued.

Charles Robinson, Published by Cassell in 1907.

W H Walker, Published by John Lane in 1907. There are around five different binding variants of the first edition including; leather, suede, blue cloth and paper-covered boards

Brinsley Le Fanu, Published by Benn in c1907 in one volume.

R. E. McEune, Published by Milner & Co in c1907.

Alice Ross Published by Nimmo, Hay & Mitchell - Undated c1907

T H Robinson & Charles Pears Published by Collins in 1908.

Harry Rountree Published by Nelson in 1908. There was also a new edition published by Collins in 1928 with new illustrations by Rountree.

Walter Hawes Published by Scott in 1908

(Evelyn) Stuart Hardy Published by John F Shaw in c1908. There are 8 illustrations but within 2 issues of the book (4 in one and a different 4 in another)

Mabel Lucie Attwell Published by Raphael Tuck in 1910

George Soper Published by Headley 1911

Frank Adams Published by Blackie in 1912

Alice B Woodward Published by Bell in 1913

Gordon Robinson Published by Kelly in 1916

Margaret W Tarrant Published by Ward Lock in 1916

A E Jackson Published by Milford in 1915

Millicent Sowerby Published by Hodder & Stoughton in 1913, this is a new set of illustrations (see 1907)

Charles Folkard Published by Black in 1921, these are the poems from the Alice books set to music by Lucy E Broadwood.

A L Bowley Published by Tuck in 1921.

Gwynedd M Hudson Published by Hodder & Stoughton in 1922 in a limited edition.

Dudley Jarrett Published by Readers Library undated (c1924)

Hume Henderson Published by Readers Library undated (c1928)

Jessie M King (cover) Winifred M Ackroyd (black & White illustrations) Charles Pears (Colour frontis & title page) Published by Collins in c1928

Helen Monro Published by Nelson in 1932

J Morton Sale Published by Wm Clowes c1933

D R Sexton Published by Shaw in 1933

M. L. Clements Published by Hutchinson in c1936

Honor C Appleton Published by Harrap in 1936

A H Watson Published by Collins in 1939

Irene Mountford Published by Collins in 1939. Includes stills from the Paramount Film.

Gil Dyer Published by Foulsham in c1939

Rene Cloke Alice published by Gawthorne in 1943 and Looking-Glass in 1950

Anthony Rado Published by Cornelius c1944

Robert Hogfeldt Published by Forlag, Sweden in 1945

Harry Riley Published by Arthur Barron in 1945

Mervyn Peake First published by Zephyr Sweden in 1946 and then by Wingate, London in 1954

Eileen Soper Published by Harrap in 1947

Hugh Gee & John Tenniel Published by Max Parrish in 1948 with 16 scenes by Gee

Philip Gough Published by Heirloom in 1949

G W Backhouse Published by Collins in 1951

Maraja. Alice published by W H Allen in 1957 & Looking-Glass in 1959

Patricia Morris Published by Beaverbrook in c1960

Pauline Baynes Published by Blackie in c1960

David Walsh & John Cooper Published by Ward Lock in 1962

Ralph Steadman Alice published by Dobson in 1967 & Looking-Glass published by MacGibbon & Kee in 1972

Janet & Anne Grahame Johnstone Published by World Distribution in 1968

Salvador Dalí Published by Maecenas Press New York in 1969

Kuniyoshi Kaneko Published by Olivette in 1974

Moritz Kennel Published by Phaidon in 1975

Barry Moser Alice published in a limited edition by Pennyroyal in 1982 & Looking-Glass the same year

- Justin Todd. Alice published by Gollancz in 1984 & Looking-glass in 1986
- Anthony Browne (author) Published by MacRae in 1985
- Peter Weevers Published by Hutchinson in 1989
- Malcolm Ashman Looking-glass published by Dragon's World in 1989 and Alice in 1990
- Helen Oxenbury Alice published by Walker in a signed limited edition in 1999 & Looking-Glass in 2005.
- Lisbeth Zwerger Published by North-South Books in 1999

Peter Blake (artist) Looking-Glass only; published in a signed limited edition by D3 Editions in 2004.

Michael Foreman (author/illustrator) Published by Sterling in 2004

John Vernon Lord Published in a limited edition by Artist's Choice in 2009 and Looking-glass in 2011

Tove Jansson English language edition was published in 1977 by Delacorte Press New York. The first UK edition was published by Tate Publishing in 2011.