

Scottish Readers Remember Children



I joined the library when I was seven years old. It was a revelation to me... from then on I've never been without books. They have given me knowledge, food for thought, great pleasure, a feeling of warm security and of being transported into a world of my own.

Marjory

Many popular themes for children's stories have proved resilient to changing tastes. The current phenomenal popularity of the schoolboy wizard Harry Potter is only the latest in a long line of school stories and characters that have appeared in books and comics including *Tom Brown's Schooldays* and Billy Bunter.



However, some once popular classics are no longer read; some can no longer be seen as innocent tales. Racial stereotyping was once common in illustrations for comics and storybooks when Scotland was part of the British Empire. A well-known example is *Little Black Sambo*, a character made famous by Scots-born author Helen Bannerman. These stories and drawings were once very popular but have largely lost their mass appeal today.

Other titles have also attracted controversy over the twentieth century, including the Noddy books by Enid Blyton, but these have proved remarkably popular in new editions and remained fresh in the memories of interviewees. The works of Rudyard Kipling, such as *The Jungle Book* and the Just-So stories, were particularly popular among pre-Second World War generations but gained new life in the late twentieth century through cartoons and other adaptations.

