

# A. A. Milne: More Than Just Winnie-The-Pooh

ALISON HALL

British author Alan Alexander (A. A.) Milne was born January 18, 1882, and every year on that day, many celebrate the bear he is mostly known for, Winnie-the-Pooh. But Milne also has a history of writing poems, plays, and other articles in various journals.

Milne graduated from Cambridge in 1903 and began to submit verse and essays to the British humor magazine *Punch*. He joined the staff there in 1906 as an assistant editor. He wrote eighteen plays and three novels before writing his collection of children's poems, *When We Were Very Young*, in 1924.

Many of Milne's stories were registered with the Copyright Office—some more than once, as different versions appeared in multiple publications. For example, the short story "The Charcoal-Burner" is registered as an article in *Royal* magazine in July 1927 as well as the *Des Moines Sunday Register* in June 1928.

Many of Milne's plays were registered with the Office as well, often noted with "the acting edition," and "in three acts," such as his plays *Mr. Pim Passes By* (1921), *Belinda: an April Folly* (1922), and *Ariadne; or, Business First* (1926). Some plays were registered with different names as they were produced in the United States. *The Fourth Wall*, played in America under the title of *The Perfect Alibi*, was registered with the Office in October 1929. Milne adapted the Kenneth Grahame novel *The Wind in the Willows* for stage in 1930 under the title *Toad of Toad Hall*, and S. French, Inc. registered this version with the Office in 1932.

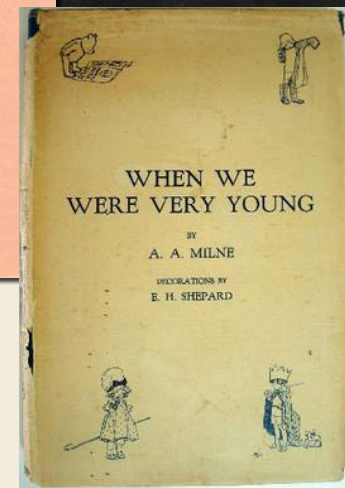
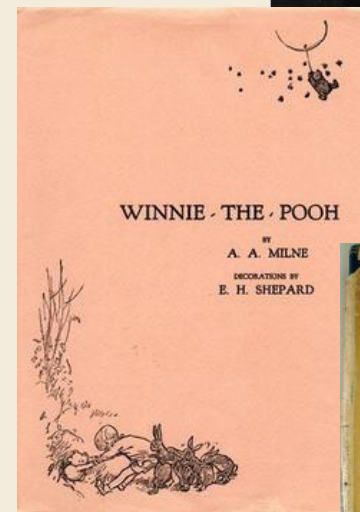
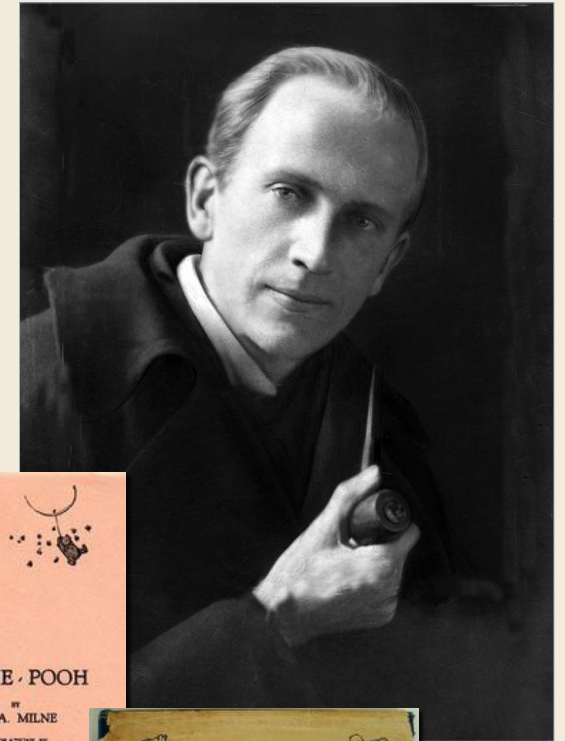
When Milne started writing the children's stories, his son, Christopher Robin Milne,

inspired the character Christopher Robin. Milne incorporated his son's stuffed animals, most notably a bear named Winnie-the-Pooh (after a Canadian black bear named Winnie), into the stories. He also created several other characters from his imagination and the fictional Hundred Acre Wood setting. *Punch* staff cartoonist E. H. Shepard illustrated Milne's stories.

*When We Were Very Young*, featuring Winnie-the-Pooh, was registered with the Office in 1924 by E.P. Dutton & Co. of New York. Milne's collection of short stories for children, *Gallery of Children*, was registered by the David McKay Company of Philadelphia in 1925. In 1932, E.P. Dutton & Co. registered "*The Christopher Robin Verses*; being 'When We Were Very Young' and 'Now We Are Six,' with a preface for parents, by A. A. Milne with twelve plates in color and text decorations by Ernest H. Shepard."

Milne also has music registered with the Office. E.P. Dutton & Co. of New York registered fourteen songs from *When We Were Very Young* with words by Milne, music by H. Fraser-Simson, and decorations by E. H. Shepard in 1925.

Milne's Winnie-the-Pooh characters continue to inspire creativity nearly a century later. New movies, television shows, and books, are released on a regular basis, and Pooh stuffed animals still make children happy. ©



Portrait of A. A. Milne with covers of the first edition of *Winnie-the-Pooh* and *When We Were Very Young*.