

## Katharine Briggs Estate

Katharine Briggs was born in 1898, one of the three daughters of Ernest Briggs, the watercolourist. She read English at Lady Margaret Hall, Oxford, gaining her D.Phil. with a thesis on folklore in 17th century literature, and became a D.Litt., Oxon in 1969. She headed an amateur theatrical company for fifteen years and during the war she served in the Women's Auxiliary Air Force. She was Visiting Professor at several universities in the United States, and president of the English Folklore Society. She is the author of the much-loved children's story HOBBERDY DICK, the great A DICTIONARY OF FAIRIES and the definitive A DICTIONARY OF BRITISH FOLK-TALES. She died in 1980.

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### Publications

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#### Children's

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Publication Details	Notes
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**Hobberdy Dick**  
1955

HOBBERDY DICK is a fantasy novel set during the English Civil War when the old supernatural world of magic was being besieged by the rationalism of the Roundheads.

Hobberdy Dick is a hobbit who lives in the hearth of an old country house and who longs to shuffle off his attachment to this world and be released into the ether.

The plot concerns a couple whose love is threatened by the brutality of war.

First published in 1955, Katherine Briggs' story about the hobgoblin whose charge it is to protect and influence the unloving Puritan family who come to live at Widford Manor after the Civil War is a classic of English children's writing.

Hobberdy Dick's benign works in favour of the characters carry the story from sadness to delight; but it is his character as ancient guardian that holds the reader. For the true conclusion is that sanctioned by fairy lore: the offer of mortal cloth for Dick to wear which will bring him eternal release from servitude.

All these strands are intertwined with wonderful ease. Katharine Briggs's absorption in 'the personnel of fairyland' confers a naturalness to the supernatural goings-on, while the precise attention she gives to its setting reinforces this. Much of her youth had been spent in Scotland, but in 1939 she had bought a house in Burford and her love of the Cotswolds, with their green roads, their barrows, and their standing stones bring accuracy and, above all, warmth to her portrayal of both landscape and people.

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**ABBEY LUBBERS  
BANSHEES &  
BOGGARTS illustrated  
by Yvonne Gilbert.**  
1979

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**KATE CRACKERNUTS**  
1963

In a land troubled by witches and feuding clans, step-sisters Kate and Katherine form an unlikely friendship over a shared love of fairies. This does not go down well with everyone . . .

Grizel Maxwell may be Kate's mother, but she is also a witch, and jealously plots to get rid of Katherine with a curse, forcing Kate and Katherine to leave their homeland to escape the evil witch and seek a cure for her terrible spell.

First published in 1963, Katherine Briggs' wonderful re-casting of the classic fable of friendship conquering all is a rare and beguiling mix of folk-lore and fantasy. The author's own fascination with the English folk-lore tradition imbues the telling with seriousness and beauty that transcend its generic roots.

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## Non-Fiction

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**Publication Details    Notes**

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<b>THE ANATOMY OF PUCK</b> 1959	An examination of fairy beliefs among Shakespeare's contemporaries and successors.
<b>A DICTIONARY OF BRITISH FOLK TALES</b> 1970	A classic in folklore scholarship arranged in 2 parts. Folk Narratives contains tales told for edification or delight, but not thought to be factually true.
<b>A DICTIONARY OF FAIRIES</b> 1976	Hobgoblins, Brownies ,Bogies And Other Supernatural Creatures
<b>FOLK TALES OF ENGLAND</b> 1967	Stupendous collection of narrative stories accrued from British Folk Tales. Divided into sections, such as Nursery stories, novells and fables, Briggs brings together a plethora of tales and anecdotes from the length and breadth of Britain. With notes and preface by Phillip Pullman.
<b>THE FOLKLORE OF THE COTSWOLDS</b> 1974	
<b>NINE LIVES: CATS IN FOLKLORE</b> 1980	