

Sickness and early death. However, Randolph's health was generally very poor and he suffered much from gastritis and a heart condition going back to an illness in his childhood. It was his health among other things which prompted his many winter trips to the Mediterranean and other warm climates. It was on such a tour in the USA in 1886 that he was taken ill again in Florida and died at St. Augustine on 12th February. A headstone still marks his grave in the cemetery there.

After his death, friends and admirers financed the memorial sculpture by Alfred Gilbert in St Paul's Cathedral Crypt, London.

Some books illustrated by Randolph Caldecott

Picture Books (two each Christmas):

1878 *The House that Jack Built;*
John Gilpin

1879 *Elegy on a Mad Dog;*
The Babes in the Wood

1880 *Sing a Song for Sixpence;*
The Three Jovial Huntsmen

1881 *The Queen of Hearts* (see picture);
The Farmer's Boy

1882 *The Milkmaid;*
Hey Diddle Diddle and Baby Bunting

1883 *The Frog He Would A' Wooing Go;*
The Fox Jumps Over the Parson's Gate

1884 *Come Lasses and Lads;*
Ride a Cock Horse and a Farmer Went Trotting

1885 *The Great Panjandrum;* *Mrs Mary Blaize*

Travel books:

The Harz Mountains; North Italian Folk;
Breton Folk

By Washington Irving:

Old Christmas (see picture);
Bracebridge Hall

By Juliana Ewing:

Jackanapes;
Daddy Darwin's Dovecote; Lob Lie-by-the-fire.



The Randolph Caldecott Society



The 1977/8 exhibition of Randolph's work at Manchester Library inspired Kenn Oultram, a Cheshire journalist, to form a Society to promote a greater interest in the work of this Chester-born artist. The Society's inaugural meeting was held on 18 June 1983, and there have been two or more meetings each year since then.

Aims: To increase interest, appreciation and knowledge of Randolph Caldecott's life and work.

Activities:

- Specialist lectures at our general meetings;
- Visits to places where Randolph lived or sketched;
- Funding prizes for art students at North East Wales Institute (NEWI), the West Cheshire College and the Queen's School, Chester;
- Annual commemoration of Randolph's birth at choral evensong in Chester Cathedral;
- Hosting members of the Randolph Caldecott Society of America on visits to this country.

Achievements:

- Prompted commemoration of Caldecott, eg by persuading the Council to put up a plaque at Randolph's birthplace and hotels to name "Randolph" rooms;
- Prompted commemorative publications & events, eg exhibition at the Worcester Museum.

It is perhaps a reflection on this country that Randolph is more widely known in the USA than he is here; this is probably because of the Caldecott Medal awarded annually by the American Library Association for the year's best illustrated children's book.

It is not our aim to replicate this award but we feel that in the work of Randolph Caldecott there is genius, wit, beauty and charm and that we should strive to bring his work and these qualities to a wider audience.

Find out more about Randolph and the Society on our Website: www.randolphcaldecott.org.uk

RANDOLPH CALDECOTT

(1846 – 1886)



Artist and Children's Book Illustrator



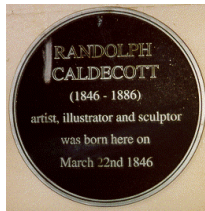
and the Randolph Caldecott Society

Randolph Caldecott transformed the world of children's books in the Victorian era. Children eagerly awaited the two books illustrated by him, priced at a shilling each, which came out each Christmas for eight years. Randolph's output, however, ranged wider than this: he illustrated novels and accounts of foreign travel, he made humorous drawings depicting hunting and fashionable life, he drew cartoons and he made sketches of the famous inside Parliament and out of it; he also exhibited sculptures and paintings in oil and watercolour in the Royal Academy and galleries.



Christmas 1879

Early years. Randolph was born on 22 March 1846 at 16 Bridge Street, on the upper storey of the famous Rows in Chester, England. He was the third child of John Caldecott, a business man and



accountant, and of his first wife, Mary Dinah (née Brookes). He went to The King's School which, in those days, was in the cathedral buildings in the centre of the city. In his childhood Randolph drew and modelled mostly animals. A small oil painting of his brother

Alfred, painted during his school days, is in Chester.

At the age of fifteen, Randolph started work in a Bank at nearby Whitchurch. Many of his later illustrations include buildings and scenery of that area. Even as young as fifteen, he had his first sketch and report published in the *Illustrated London News*: of a disastrous fire at the Queen Hotel in Chester. He took up hunting and this led him in later years to produce numerous drawings and sketches of hunting scenes, many of them humorous.



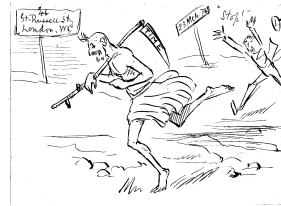
From *The Fox jumps over the Parson's Gate* (1883)

In Manchester.

At twenty-one, Randolph moved to the head office of a Manchester Bank. He took the opportunity to study in the evenings at the Manchester School of Art. It was a habit of his at this

Cover picture: from *John Gilpin* (1878)

time, which he maintained all his life, to decorate his letters, papers and documents with marginal sketches to illustrate the content or provide amusement. A number of his letters have been re-printed with their illustrations in Michael Hutchings' book *Yours Pictorially*. In 1870, drawings by Randolph began to be published in the monthly magazine *London Society*.



(Letter-head from Randolph's letter to his sister Sophia after his birthday, 1874.)

In London. Encouraged by this evidence of his ability to support himself by his art, in 1872 Randolph gave up his job and moved to London. Within two years, he had become a successful magazine illustrator working on commission. His work included individual sketches, illustrations of articles and of accounts of foreign travel. He remained in London for seven years, mostly living just opposite the British Museum. Here, in the heart of Bloomsbury, he met and readily made friends with many artistic and literary people, including Rosetti, George du Maurier (a fellow contributor to *Punch*), and Millais.

Fame. In 1869, Randolph had an oil painting hung in the Royal Manchester Institute and he was hung in the Royal Academy for the first time in 1876. As a water-colourist, he was elected to the Royal Institute of Watercolour Painting in 1872.

In 1877 Edmund Evans, who was a colour printer and talented engraver, lost the services of Walter Crane as his children's book illustrator and asked Randolph to do illustrations for two books for Christmas. The results were *The House that Jack Built* and *The Diverting History of John Gilpin*, published in 1878. They were an immediate success; so much so that he produced two more each year until he died. The stories and rhymes were all of Randolph's choosing and in some cases were written or added to by him. By 1884, sales of Randolph's nursery rhymes had reached 867,000 copies (of twelve books) and he was internationally famous.



The House that Jack Built

Randolph also illustrated books by famous authors of the time, including Washington Irving, Juliana Ewing, and

Captain Marryatt. Among well known admirers of his work were Gaugin and Van Gogh.

Randolph continued to travel, partly for the sake of his health, and to make drawings of the people and places he visited; these drawings, accompanied by his humorous and witty captions and narrative, were published in the *London Graphic*.



"... deeply interested in the copying of a picture" (*Graphic*, Dec 1882).

Home and marriage. In 1879 Randolph moved to Kent, where he became engaged to Marian Brind. They were married in 1880. There were no children of the marriage. In 1882 they moved to Surrey; they also rented a house in Kensington.

[contd. overleaf]

To join the Society, complete coupon below and send with a cheque or postal order, payable to "Randolph Caldecott Society", to the Treasurer, Mr R Evers, Boundary Cottage, Mulsford Lane, Worthenbury, Wrexham, Wales, LL13 0AW. Tel 01948 770 633.

Annual subscription rates from 2004/5 are:

- Individuals: **£10;**
- Family (all at same address)/Corporate: **£15.**



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