

# Forgotten treasures shed new light on Little Grey Rabbit author

October 12 2009

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(PhysOrg.com) -- A suffragette poem, penned by a world-famous children's author and kept privately at a University of Manchester Hall of Residence for over a century, has been made available online.

The passionate lines called "Argument" were hand-written by Alice J Taylor - later to become Alison Uttley - and published in the University's women's student magazine of 1904 - itself a unique document.

It is now available on the Alison Uttley Society website with a rare [photograph](#), taken in 1906, of eminent Manchester physicist Professor Arthur Schuster, physics department staff, other University dignitaries and Schuster's current and former students.

Physicist and astronomer Arthur Stanley Eddington, who verified Einstein's new [theory of gravity](#) by observing the 1919 eclipse, poses alongside Schuster and student Uttley.

The picture was found in pieces at the bottom of a drawer by retired Professor of Physics Robin Marshall from the University's Faculty of Engineering and Physical Sciences, who digitally reassembled the photo.

Known to millions across the world as the author of Tales Of Little Grey Rabbit and Sam Pig - Uttley was the second woman ever to graduate in physics at The University of Manchester.

She bequeathed a third of her literary income to support students at Ashburne Hall, where the documents are kept.

Ashburne Hall was founded in 1899 as a hall of residence for women students and Uttley lived there between 1903 and 6.

In the journal, Uttley also describes a series of wacky inventions including a vacuum cleaner used to transport students to their lectures, boots with central heating, and a teapot with an alarm which is sprung when running low.

Uttley's diaries, which are kept at the University's John Rylands Library, were published last month.

President of the Uttley Society, Professor Denis Judd, said the poem and picture provides a unique glimpse into the early radicalism of the author.

Professor Judd, who edited the 'Private Diaries of Alison Uttley 1932 to 1971' said: "This fascinating document has been stored at the University's Ashburne Hall for more than a century.

“With the recent publication of the Uttley diaries - it struck me that these documents, which have been lying forgotten in the Hall’s archive, tell us more about her early years.

“So we felt it would be good to draw the public’s attention to them.”

He added: “In her diaries she was scornful and dismissive of her near neighbour Enid Blyton and wrote how she detested her main illustrator, Margaret Tempest.

“But these entries show an idealistic, and playful side of a much younger Uttley.

“And the photograph - so lovingly restored by Professor Marshall gives a unique glimpse into early twentieth university life.

“We hope the public will enjoy them on the Uttley society web site.”

After her husband James’ suicide in 1930, Uttley launched her writing career to support her only child John, and went on to write more than 100 books.

Sam Pig, Brock the Badger, Tim Rabbit, Little Grey Rabbit, Squirrel and Hare have mesmerised children ever since.

## THE POEM

(Written during the Lent term of 1906)

At Ashburne there is a Society  
Which has rapidly gained notoriety,  
It’s name I can state with propriety,  
“Argument”

We meet after Punch on a Saturday  
With tea and sweet cakes we're a party gay,  
Instead of eliciting chatting as Students may,  
"Argument."

We talk of meetings Political  
And all of us soon are so critical  
Our speeches become analytical  
"Argument

"The Signs of our age are Synthetical,"  
Do you call Walt Whitman poetical?"  
"My theory is not hypothetical  
Argument."

We talk of the Status of human kind  
Of Suffrage, and greatness of human mind  
Equality, love, but we always find  
Argument

If we began all our talks at the break of day  
They'd continue till after the Sun's last ray  
As we get into bed, the last word we say  
Argument!

A.J.T. (Alice Jane Taylor)

More information: To see the entries, visit [www.alisonuttley.co.uk](http://www.alisonuttley.co.uk)

Provided by University of Manchester ([news](#) : [web](#))

Citation: Forgotten treasures shed new light on Little Grey Rabbit author (2009, October 12)  
retrieved 2 May 2024 from

<https://phys.org/news/2009-10-forgotten-treasures-grey-rabbit-author.html>

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