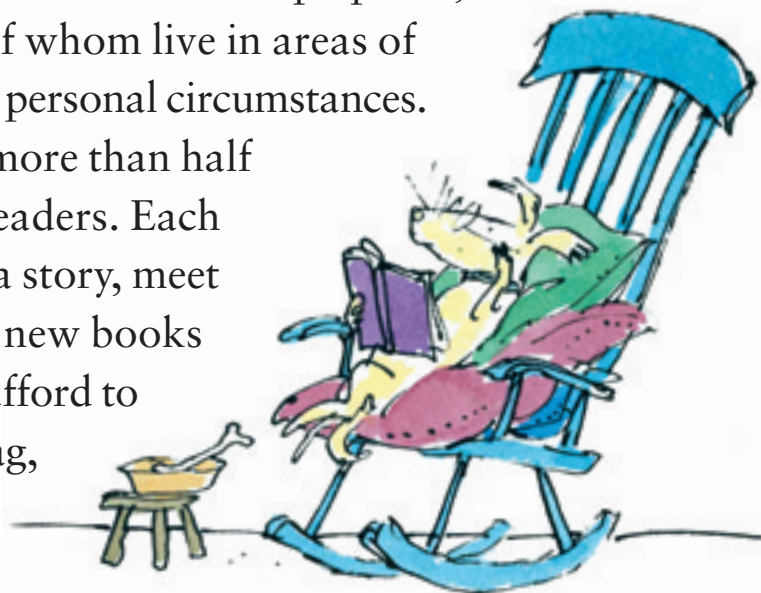


Reading, even at its most basic, is the essence of education. In the earliest stages it is pictures, not words, that first draw children into books. Behind every great children's writer there is usually an equally gifted illustrator – from Lewis Carroll and John Tenniel to Roald Dahl and Quentin Blake.

Our 2004 Annual Report presents the work of some of the best British book illustrators. Through their variety, energy and perennial inspiration, they have encouraged the young (and the not so young) to develop an interest in reading that for many has become a lifelong passion.

This theme is reflected in British Land's support for Reading Is Fundamental, UK (RIF), an initiative of the National Literacy Trust. Working with hundreds of volunteers across the UK, RIF promotes the enjoyment of reading for children, the importance of book choice and the value to families of sharing books together. British Land's support will enable RIF's volunteers to help up to 5,000 children across the UK in 2004 – many of whom live in areas of economic disadvantage, or face unsettling personal circumstances.

Since 1996, RIF has distributed more than half a million books among 200,000 young readers. Each project gives children the chance to hear a story, meet an author or illustrator and choose three new books which they may not otherwise be able to afford to take home and keep, along with a book bag, book mark, bookplates and stickers.



*Skool for heroes. Once agane another year lie before us with all its brite promise. Everyone, be he man woman or child, will be wondering wot he can do to improve and in some cases it ought to take a whole year to find out.*

