

**St. John's Wood and the Hundred Acre Wood:
E. H. Shepard and Rural Modernity**

In 1957, E. H. Shepard published *Drawn from Memory*, a memoir of 1887, the year he was seven and the year of Queen Victoria's Golden Jubilee. This post-World War II book, like its sequel *Drawn from Life* (1962), is filled with Shepard's black and white drawings, executed in a style familiar to readers of his more famous post-World War I books *Winnie-the-Pooh* (1926), *The House at Pooh Corner* (1928), and *The Wind in the Willows* (1931 edition). Familiar style, but not familiar content: the memoirs mainly picture Shepard's childhood urban geography of St. John's Wood and London, lacking precisely the scenes of woods and water that made his children's books so popular. Adult readers, traumatized like Shepard himself by years of the first devastating global industrial war, loved those interwar children's books in part because they were eager to revisit in memory what was, in peacetime, being lost to development: the English countryside. For child readers, those illustrations of woods and water presumably had many diverse effects, one of which was to promote pastoral images of an imagined community, "England," which ten years later, as young adults, they would be asked to defend against Nazi Germany.

Many historians and print scholars have studied the artifacts, origins, and impacts of the "flood" of interwar publications about rural England (c.f. Lowerson, Wilde, Howkins, Newby), but none have considered how Shepard's beloved "classic" children's books also engaged the cultural and political dynamics of what I call "rural modernity." In this paper I focus on Shepard's illustrations of fantasized landscapes and remembered cityscapes, of both his children's and adults' differently postwar books, to intervene in critical discussions among children's literature scholars that consign Shepard to the realm of pure pastoral, beyond the reach of modernity, and of scholars of English modernity who ignore children's literature altogether. The critical category of rural modernity is key to this revisionist effort.