

CHAPTER 5

# Now We Are Six



**T**he second volume of poems was published on 13 October 1927 in Britain and in America simultaneously, and was a follow-on from *When We Were Very Young*. Indeed, Milne himself wrote, ‘We have been nearly three years writing this book. We began it when we were very young ... and now we are six.’

The poems had been written spasmodically from 1924 onwards, and over half had already been written when *Winnie-the-Pooh* was published. Some had been published in various periodicals, and some were already illustrated

by Shepard, although when brought together for book publication a number of changes were made. For instance, Shepard wrote in his own hand on a copy of the poem originally called 'Dinkie' that the title had later been changed to 'Binker'.

The book was dedicated 'To Anne Darlington now she is seven and because she is so speshal', and Milne implied that the book had been 'promised' to Anne, who was the daughter of W. A. Darlington, both a personal friend of Milne and an influential theatre critic for the *Daily Telegraph*. His youngest daughter, Anne, was Christopher Robin's closest friend; they went to the same school in Chelsea, and later Anne often came to stay at Cotchford Farm, sometimes without her parents. In Shepard's private papers there are a number of photographs of Christopher Robin and Anne, which may have been taken by Shepard himself on one of his periodic visits to Cotchford

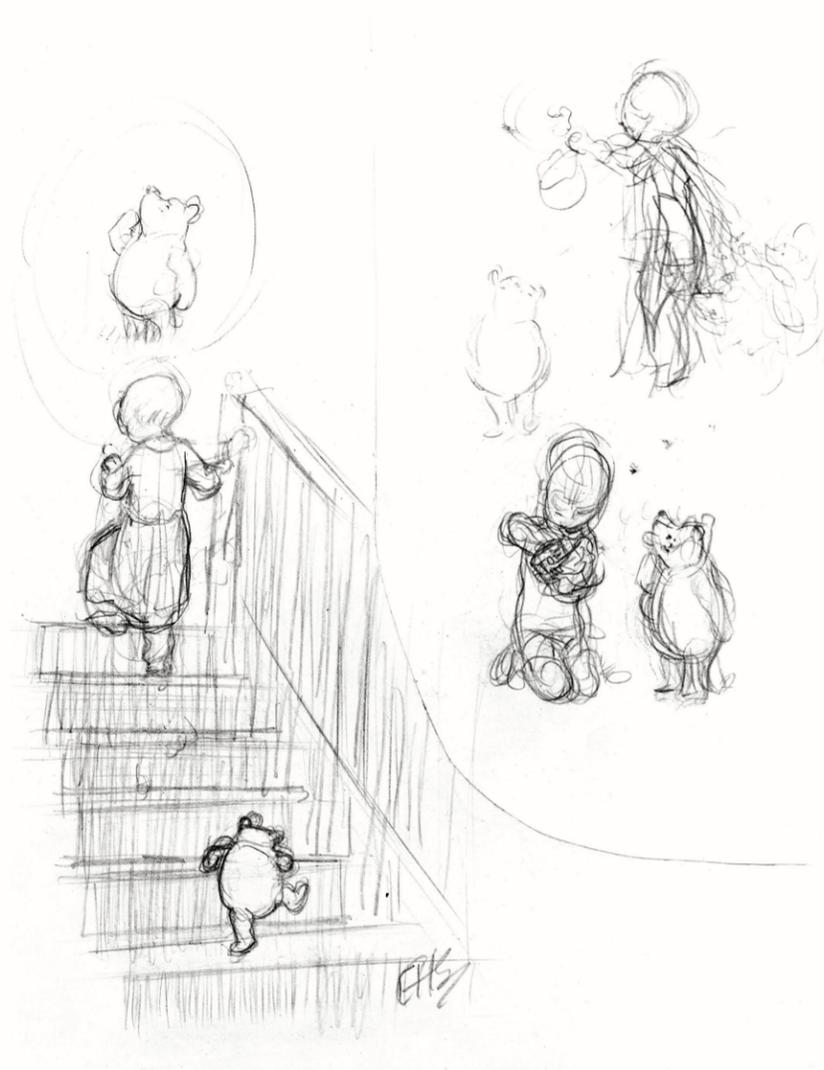


Christopher Robin Milne  
+ Anne  
in their Sussex Garden

Christopher Robin  
Milne and Anne  
Darlington at Cotchford  
Farm, with Shepard's  
description on the  
reverse.



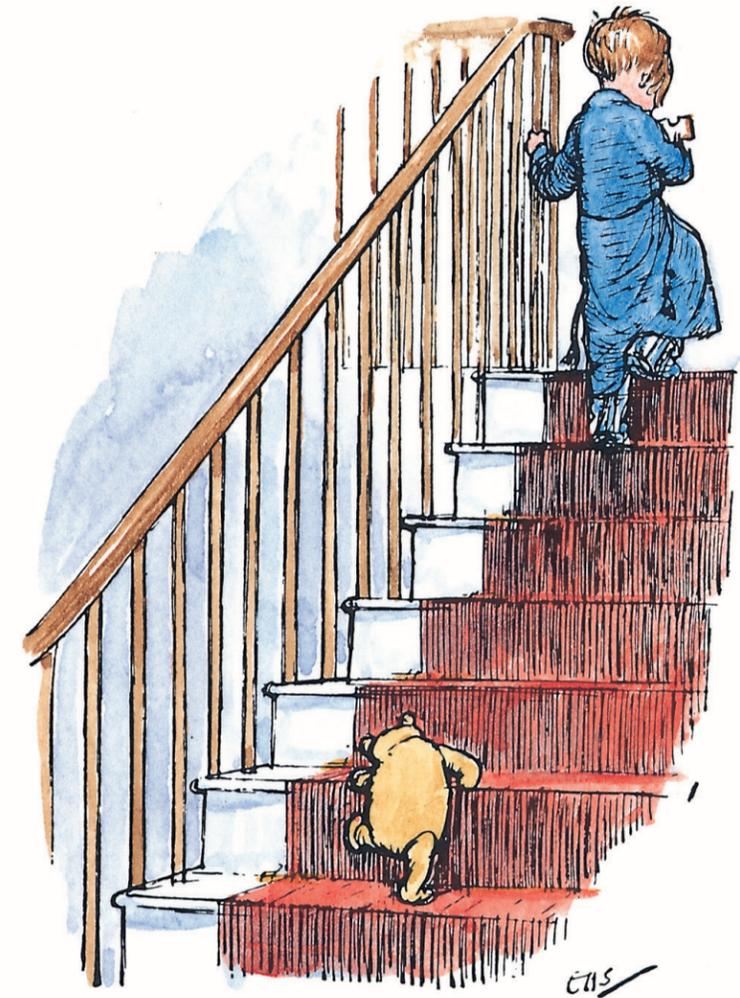
A page from Shepard's sketchbook showing a tree with careful notes for when the sketch was later worked up – possibly as a model for 'The Charcoal-Burner'.



Very rough early drafts for 'Us Two', and one of the published illustrations.

Farm. Shepard seems to have used these photographs closely for the drawings for two particular poems in the collection: 'Buttercup Days', which refers to both Anne and Christopher Robin by name, and shows them together, heads bent over the buttercups and with Cotchford Farm clearly in the background, and later in 'The Good Little Girl'.

Shepard continued to research meticulously and to sketch many preliminary drawings; the carefully annotated pencil sketch of a tree, which may have been for the country scene of 'The Charcoal-Burner', shows the detail he put into what are, at first glance, simple and uncomplicated images.



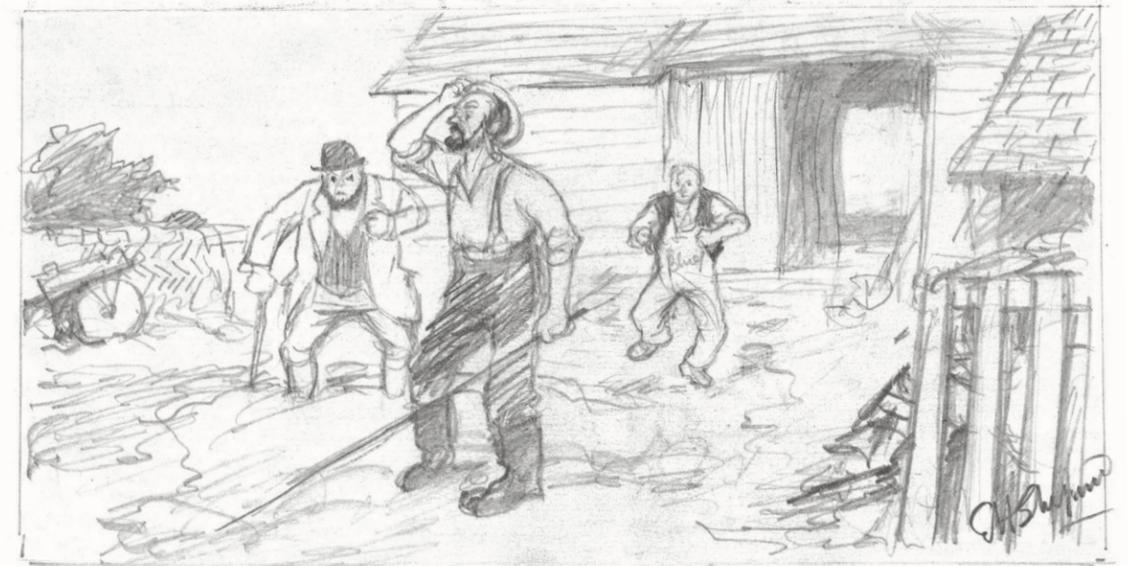
There is a wonderful set of two draft pencil drawings for 'The Little Black Hen' that show great character and movement in the figures, with a totally convincing farmyard setting, undoubtedly drawn from life.

There are also a considerable number of pencil sketches in Shepard's sketchbooks from this time that don't appear to have been used for this collection. Shepard would draw images almost always from life and then decide where to use them; sometimes this would be much later, as with the drawings of his son, Graham, made in the years before the First World War but not used until decades later as models for Christopher Robin.



First sketch p. 60

Two preliminary pencil sketches for 'The Little Black Hen' (above). Unusually, both were signed by Shepard. And the final published illustrations (below).



First sketch for 'The Little Black Hen' p. 61  
N.W.A.S.

