The origins of this ‘children’s literature’ issue of the Bulletin go back, for me, to two main things – a copy of the Puffin story books edition of Grimms’ fairytales, which is one of the few books I kept from my childhood reading when, in adolescence, I disposed of other pieces; and a long visit, nearly thirty years later, in the autumn of 1978, to the Osborne Collection of Early Children’s Books in the Toronto Public Library. The riches of the Osborne Collection and the helpfulness of its staff rekindled my childhood enthusiasm and hooked me on the historical study of children’s books. I was delighted, therefore, when the opportunity arose to edit a thematic issue of the Bulletin on children’s literature.

My aim has been to gather contributions that reflect something of the international character of children’s literature and include a broad spectrum of views on the subject. In addition to approaching two of the most knowledgeable experts in the field (Brian Alderson and Gillian Avery), I decided to invite a variety of friends and colleagues, many with Manchester connections, to contribute articles from their own particular literary, linguistic and historical standpoints. As a result this collection of essays comprises perspectives on Danish, French, German, Irish, Latin and Swiss material as well as on books in English. Not all of these focus strictly on children’s literature as defined by Harvey Darton – ‘printed works produced ostensibly to give children spontaneous pleasure, and not primarily to teach them, nor solely to make them good, nor to keep them profitably quiet’.1 Both Madame d’Aulnoy and Ludwig Tieck, for example, expected an adult as well as adolescent readership for their idiosyncratic versions of fairytales and traditional tales, and Struwwelhitler, the Nazi parody of Hoffmann’s famous book, was aimed at adults who were familiar with the children’s classic. The educational aspect of children’s literature is considered in the articles by Wilfried Keutsch (Sarah Trimmer) and Penny Brown (Madame de Genlis). Christopher Stray’s article, ‘The smell of Latin grammar’, extends the boundaries further with

an excursion into the field of formal education and the history of textbooks, an area for which the Textbook Colloquium and its journal *Paradigm* provide a focus in this country.

One of the particular enjoyments of putting all these articles together has lain in noting the spontaneous, unforced cross-connections between them. Thus, Brian Alderson's article on the publisher James Burns links up with Martin Sutton's detailed discussion of the first English translation of the Grimms' 'Little Red Cap; or, Little Red Riding-hood', which appeared in a collection published by Burns. The articles by Máire West and Raymond H. Thompson examine, from differing viewpoints, the ways in which Irish and Arthurian legends and historical traditions have been adapted at different periods for children. Readers of the whole volume will observe other links as they read through the articles. The world of children's literature is not self-contained, and several of the articles demonstrate how much of a continuum there is between children's and adult literature. As important are the cross-connections between cultures. British children's literature has been enormously enriched by translations and adaptations from other European sources – Madame d'Aulnoy and Madame de Genlis, Grimms' and Andersen's fairytales, Christoph von Schmid's religious tales, Hoffmann's *Struwwelpeter*, Johanna Spyri's *Heidi*. What is often neglected here is the detailed knowledge of how such books were translated, adapted and illustrated and what their publishing history has been. Several articles in this collection attempt to remedy that deficiency.

The John Rylands University Library of Manchester has relatively modest holdings of children's books, but it has recently acquired an important archive and collection of books by Elfrida Vipont, who was born and spent the early part of her life in Manchester. This is described in the article by Brenda Scragg.

It has been a pleasure to collect the articles for this issue of the *Bulletin*. I have to thank all the contributors for their readiness to respond to invitations to write. Many other people helped in suggesting names and in encouraging the project. I hope that readers will find much to interest, instruct and entertain them in the following pages.