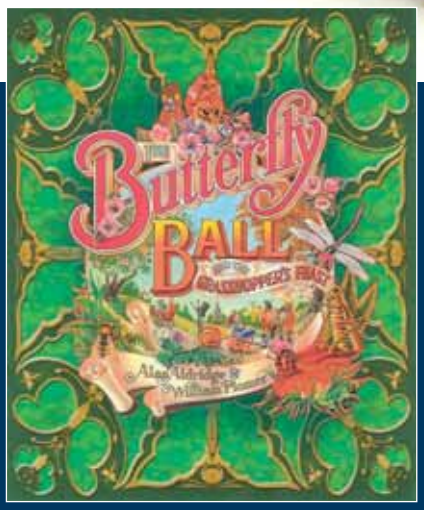
"The Adam and Eve of anthropomorphic animal fantasy for children"*

PRESS RELEASE



THE BUTTERFLY BALL

AND THE GRASSHOPPER'S FEAST

illustrated by 60's graphic entertainer, ALAN ALDRIDGE, is a lavish redesigned edition, published in October by Templar Publishing.

*Philip Howard writing in a new survey of the treasures of the British Library.

" … tell them this greatest of days has begun – the day of the Feast and the Butterfly Ball"

and so begins the wonderful creation by legendary British artist ALAN ALDRIDGE

THE BUTTERFLY BALL

AND THE GRASSHOPPER'S FEAST

Republished by Templar Publishing in October 2008

DURING THE 1960's, Alan Aldridge made his name as Art Director of Penguin's fiction list, graphic designer for the Beatles' Apple company and the creator of iconic adverts, record sleeves and posters for luminaries of the era such as Andy Warhol, The Who, Elton John and The Rolling Stones. Aldridge's extraordinary designs caught the mood of the time with their vibrant colours and fantastical images.

"Aldridge is the Gov'nor … no-one comes close to matching his influence on illustration in the 20th Century" – Sir John Betjeman, Times Literary Review, 1975.

In the early 1970's, Aldridge made the move from London to Norfolk and began to apply his visionary talents to a new challenge – an extraordinary children's book. Once ensconced in a large country house in rural Norfolk, Aldridge recalls *"I realised I could try to be a new Beatrix Potter … it was a new type of thinking for me"*. He found initial inspiration in Sir John Tenniel's illustrations of Lewis Carroll's works. After reading that Tenniel couldn't depict *"a wasp in a wig"*, Aldridge took up the artistic challenge and was further inspired by the 19th century classic by the poet William Roscoe.

"It didn't work for me as a poem, but it worked as an idea for a summer's day: these creatures having a ball. I made it that all the creatures were going to celebrate a day of peace, to lay down their stings and fangs. I thought I'd get a bit of an angle to it".

The poet and novelist William Plomer penned the poems to match the illustrations, sadly passing away on the eve of publication.

The book was a huge success, the first edition (25,000 copies) selling out three days after its publication in September 1973. *The Butterfly Ball* went on to sell another 700,000 copies that year and won the 1973 Whitbread Children's Book of the Year award. Though a planned animated feature film was not made, it did result in an album of music by former Deep Purple member Roger Glover. There was also an audio recording by Judi Dench and Michael Hordern, and a full range of Butterfly Ball merchandise.

"I would never condescend to children. The passion and the madness I brought to the pictures came through honesty."
– Alan Aldridge, interview, 1985.

Having already enchanted a generation of children, this redesigned edition of *The Butterfly Ball* will bring Aldridge's amazing fantasy world to a whole new generation of young readers and appeal to all fans of his distinctive artwork.

NOTES FOR EDITORS:

- *The Butterfly Ball and the Grasshopper's Feast* is published in October 2008 to coincide with a major retrospective of Aldridge's work at The Design Museum (10 October 08 – 25 January 09) and publication of his biography *The Man with Kaleidoscope Eyes* by Thames and Hudson.
- The Media View at The Design Museum will be on 9th October from 12 – 2pm.
- Alan Aldridge is available for interview.

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