



Kelmscott Literacy dept



80 years of Penguin paperbacks

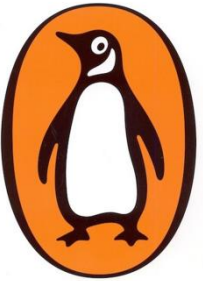
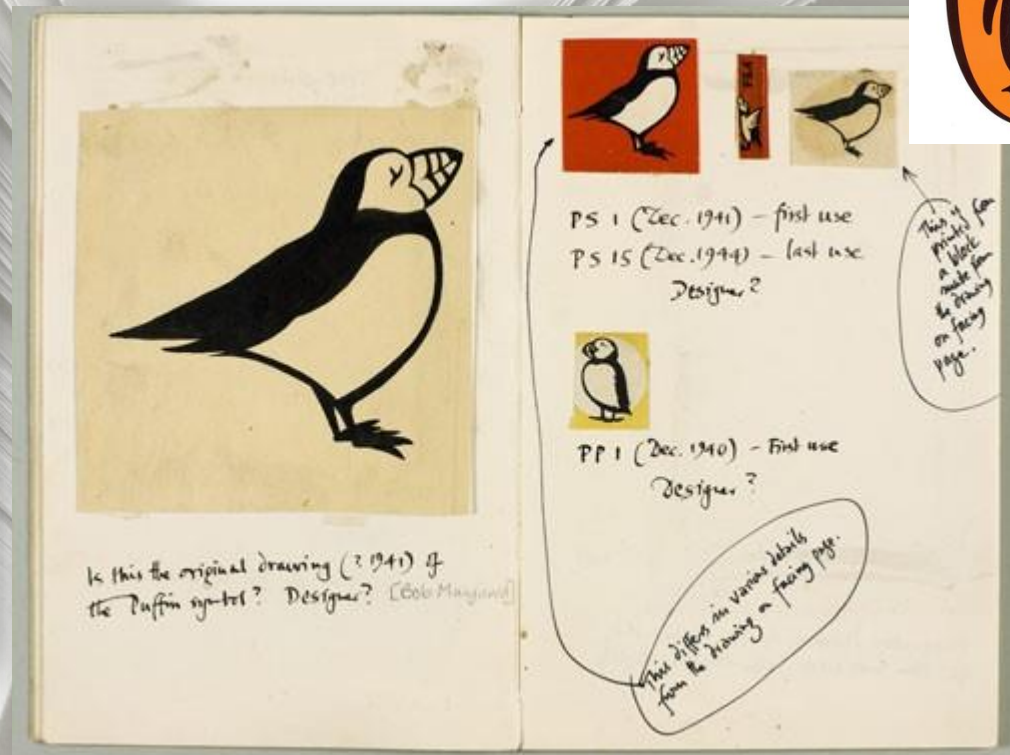


From the moment it was founded in 1935 it broke the mould. Publisher Allen Lane was visiting Agatha Christie in Devon and, while waiting for his train back to London, was appalled by the paltry selection of reading material on offer at the station shop. He decided books should be available outside of libraries and traditional bookshops and more importantly, be affordable.

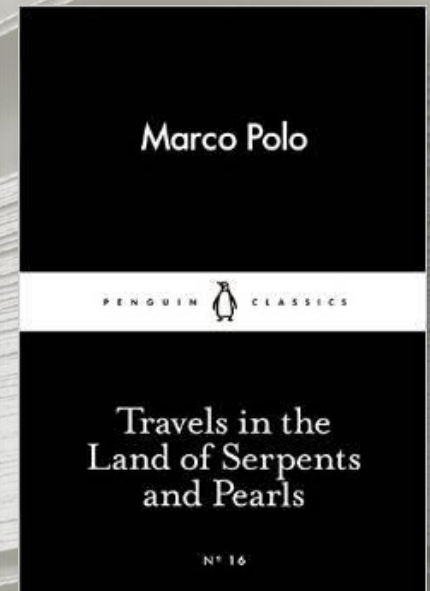
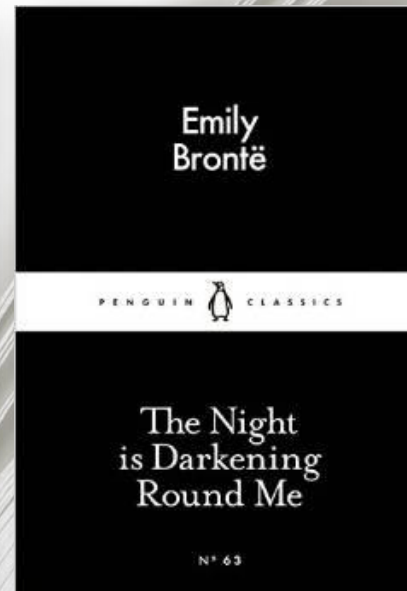
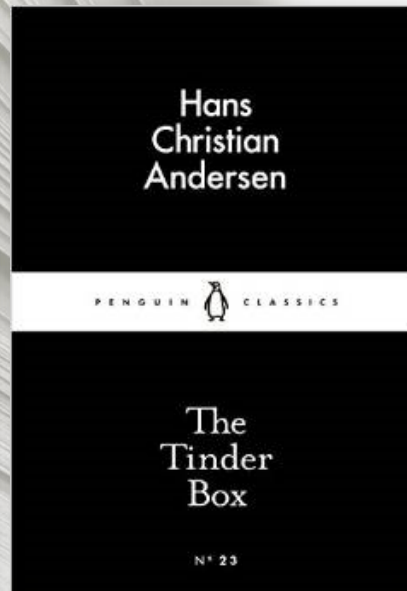
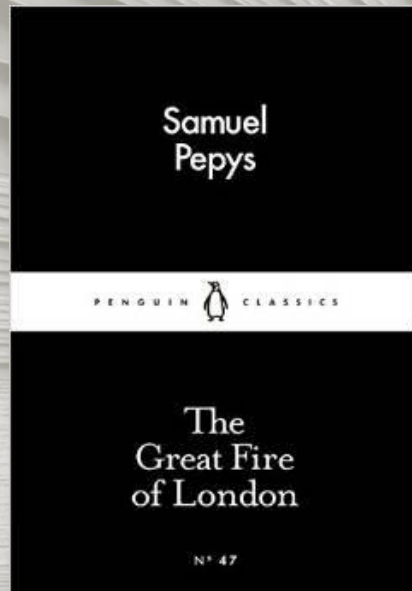


In 1967 the Science Museum commissioned Terence Cuneo to paint a superb 20ft by 10ft canvas of the busy concourse of Waterloo Station. The artist's perspective from the Great Hall, Southern Railway, London, 1967. The painting is a masterpiece of detail, capturing the essence of a busy London station.

They needed a name for their publishing company, various names were touted, and in some cases (Dolphin, Porpoise) rejected because they were already in use. A secretary Joan Coles shouted out the name Penguin. The idea was accepted on the spot and an artist was sent to London Zoo to draw them.



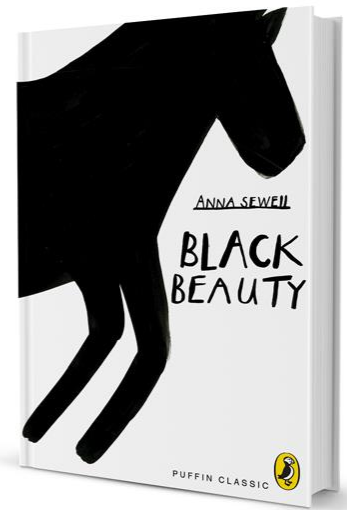
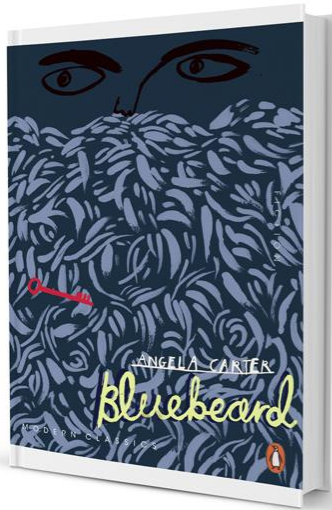
Eighty years later, to mark the anniversary, Penguin is releasing 80 Little Black Classics, to be sold for 80p each. “You could get stacks of these books for the price of a pack of cigarettes now” says Penguin Classics publishing director. “It was and is a very democratic idea and it is nice to continue that tradition”.



Designing obsession: The book covers that brought art into the home.



One of Penguin's greatest achievements was to make books that were collectable by ordinary people who could not afford fine bindings or limited editions. Founder Allen Lane and his brothers had a near-obsession with their design.



Penguin Modern Classics Covers Get Redesigned

