

# DCUK Aardman Collection

DCUK – The Original Wooden Duck Company



## Short Summary

Our hand-carved and painted DCUK ducklings have been dressing up as characters from Wallace & Gromit.

Our first licence has been a huge success, delighting both collectors and retailers.

They are charming, memorable, and can turn smiles into sales.

## Longer Description

Charm. Quality. Imagination. These are the values at the heart of DCUK.

Every character, campaign, and customer initiative must tick those boxes. And, most importantly, it's about helping people to smile. As an emotional gifting brand, it's why we do what we do. That may sound cheesy, but it's also true.

The same mindset has shaped the first ever licensed collaboration in our 21 years.

We partnered with Aardman Animations in 2025 to celebrate the renewed excitement around Wallace and Gromit thanks to the release of a new film, *Vengeance Most Fowl*. Both brands share a love of smile-raising characters and a playful, whimsical approach to storytelling and customer engagement. This helped our collaboration feel 'just right' within the first few minutes of our first ever meeting together.

Aardman's world is iconic and instantly recognisable. Our DCUK characters are hand-carved, and hand painted from natural bamboo, with each one slightly different and unique, thanks to our artisan approach.

Traditional licensing usually relies on strict consistency and definitive designs that need to be approved to replicate at scale... so at first, our traditional hand-carved approach felt like a real challenge.

It also quickly became clear to the DCUK team that simply replicating Aardman characters in bamboo root designs would lose what makes both brands special to their fans and collectors.

We spent many weeks having fun, playing around with the options. Designs, sketches, samples, and working with brand guidelines from the Aardman IP. We had many suggestions of characters, styles, approaches, and ways to weave both brands together in a meaningful (and achievable) way.

The turning point was when we decided to stop trying to recreate Aardman's characters and simply let our DCUK characters dress up as them instead. Instead of being versions of our favourite Aardman characters, we let our ducklings become playful fans, cosplaying or dressing up as them instead.

This design choice felt perfect, as it protected both the integrity and approach of our literal hands-on processes, whilst also paying full respect to the original licensed IP.

After several rounds of prototypes and constant back-and-forth collaboration, both brands agreed we'd nailed it.

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We've been thrilled with the results over the last few months, across all channels. Our Aardman licensed ducklings have already become our bestselling characters of the year so far, and we've been sold out twice. Wallace Duckling has outsold others by nearly 4:1, and Feathers McGraw by over 5:1. Retailers are delighted too, as their stock flies off shelves as fast as we can replace it, with new stock being prioritised again in recent months.

We've got new Dinky Duck versions on the way, along with an exciting Gromit Jumper Duckling. We've set up larger production runs for spring 2026 to offer DCUK official stockists, and have seen strong momentum from influencer campaigns that boosted sales, mailing list sign-ups, and brand visibility. Several influencers online have really gone the extra mile, thanks to their love of what we've done with Aardman. Reviews have been amazing from Aardman fans, DCUK collectors, and everyone in between.

This collaboration has worked not because it was easy, but because both brands treated it with the same respect we give to craft.

This collaboration has worked so well, so quickly for a few reasons. It's not just a licensing deal between two fun, playful brands. It's proof that licensing can still be surprising, charming, quirky, memorable, and brave.

Our work also proves that licensing does not have to rely on mass-production and standard approaches to be successful. Emotional gifting with licensed properties can still feel exciting, unique, expressive and full of personality, while still delivering commercial results.

We'd love our fantastic first ever year of licensing to be recognised by this year's judging panel, made up of people who know what success looks like.

And we'd really love to reward the tireless efforts of everyone involved with our first ever Gift of The Year Award. Thank you.

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## Material Description

Both the Aardman Ducklings are hand-carved from specially selected quality bamboo root, then shaped, cut, sanded and formed into our famous duckling shape. We then apply our trademark teak wood duckling heads to each one, which, like the bamboo bodies, all have slightly different markings, colours and blemishes.

We like to think it all adds to the overall unique charm.



Feathers McGraw has painted feet that match his on-screen brand colour, and a resin moulded glove hat that's one of the most iconic elements in the Wallace and Gromit universe. Once a design was approved that matched accurately, it was cast and moulded for all items, and then each one is painted and glued on by hand.

Bringing the Wallace Duckling to life is even more involved, with painted 3D elements for the shirt and tie, matching colours to brand guidelines. We then apply a soft, malleable resin to the top half of each bamboo body, and carefully create a repeating knit-style pattern for the jumper. This is then painted in the relevant character colour.

Both ducklings have a DCUK name tag featuring their character name, plus a special laminated card brand tag, to show the official license details, copyright message, and a visual reference to the original character.

They are sent out to customers and retailers in tissue paper and protective card around the top of the heads. These are removed before being placed for sale in shops, or sent out to customers via our own eCommerce website.

Thank you.