



The Letterpress Project

An Interview With Brian Moses

Q1. What are your earliest memories of books and reading? For example, did you have a favourite or inspirational book?

I read and read and read, beside the fire on cold winter evenings and under the bedclothes at night when I should have been going to sleep. Books hooked me, I always had my nose in a book. However boring life was, a book could lead me away from everyday life and into fantasy worlds that would excite and inspire me. To my mind, a book was a ticket to an adventure, and that's something I'm always speaking about to the children I meet.

One day I joined Ramsgate library and discovered whole shelves of Enid Blyton books, then it was Jennings, William, Billy Bunter (very non-pc these days!) and *Biggles*.

Q2. What inspired you to become an author / illustrator?

I was drawn to poetry through my enjoyment of the lyrics of rock music, particularly singer/songwriters like Bob Dylan, Joni Mitchell and The Doors. The poetry I was offered in school made little impression on me at the time and it wasn't until I picked up a book of poems by Liverpool Poets – Adrian Henri, Roger McGough & Brian Patten, that I realised that poetry could be fun, that it could speak to me in a language that I understood and that it had relevance to my life as a teenager. I wrote my first poem at the age of sixteen to try and persuade a girl to go out with her. It failed to achieve its purpose.

Q3. For you, what makes a successful book or illustration?

I've had over two hundred books published, but I still don't know the answer to this question! I suspect that it's being in the right place at the right moment. Miss that moment and the demand has passed. I love to be able to predict new trends and write something I'm sure will be of that moment.

Q4. Do you have a specific audience in mind when you write your books / plan your illustrations?

Generally, it's the audiences who turn up for my live events. I've been holding these for thirty-five years now! When I'm writing, I know some poems will work best in a live environment, and that they'll lead children through a range of emotions when performed. Other material I know will be better appreciated on the page, when readers take their new books home with them.

Q5. What future do you think the physical book has? For example, do you think the electronic book will replace the physical book?

I believe that there will always be a demand for the physical book. Kindles are useful too, but they haven't replaced the book as they were predicted to do.

Q6. Are you a book collector? Is there a special book you'd love to own?

I am a book collector. Not so many now since we downsized but as you can see from the photo, my office was once filled with books. I have a vast collection of children's poetry books, and I particularly like and collect the books of travel writer H V Morton which reveal how different the world was in the 1940s/50s when he was writing.

Thanks for making me think.

Brian Moses