



The Letterpress Project

Author and Illustrator E-Interviews

An Interview With Andy Briggs

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

I was brought up reading comic books, from the Beano to Spiderman. However, when I eventually moved onto books, there are a few that left indelible memories. 'The Lost World' (Arthur Conan Doyle) and 'Stig of the Dump' (Clive King) both of which inspired me with a sense of travel and wonder, and the 'Captain Cobwebb' (Gordon Boshell) series which remain some of the most imaginative stories I have ever read.

Q2. What inspired you to become an author?

I always wanted to create stories. Not necessarily as books, or indeed comics. My dad and brother instilled in me a healthy love of film, so my first writing attempts were screenplays. That led to my first professional writing job in film then in television. The books came a little later as I realised that stories often find their own niche, some things can't be films, others struggle to be books. So I chose the best of both worlds.

Q3. For you, what makes a successful book?

I think this is a question everybody wants the answer to! Of course, this can only be answered once the word 'successful' has been defined. To me a successful book is one that not only makes the reader think, but inspires them to do something new. After school visits, I am always touched when I receive letters and emails about pupils who have been inspired to write their own stories. Often they

are kids who, according to the teachers, would never have contemplated doing so. That's a success in my mind.

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

It's impossible to second guess somebody else's opinion, and I think a good story spans ages groups. So I write for a target audience I know well: me.

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

I remember the publishing world panicking when e-readers came out, and various authors announced the death of the paper book. But when TV appeared they said it would kill the radio. When game consoles began entertaining kids, everybody said the film industry would die. Instead the movie box office continues to grow, we all have radios in our cars, and ebooks are no different. Most people I know who read ebooks read more of them than they ever did physical copies, but those (like me) who prefer a paperback will never change. And as for children's publishing, I have met tens of thousands of children over the years and less than 1% of them have an ebook reader, so if they're not reading them – it must be their parents.

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

I never give my books away, I horde them. I'm lucky to have a library in my house which I intend to continue to fill. That said, I don't chase first editions, I just want the magic of the story that's trapped between the pages, preferably bound in a rather fetching cover...