



## **The Letterpress Project**

### **Author and Illustrator E-Interviews**

Thank you for agreeing to take part in this series of Letterpress Project e-interviews that we are undertaking over the coming months. The Letterpress Project is a not-for-profit initiative that exists to promote the value and pleasures of the physical book and we are keen to get the thoughts of authors and book illustrators about their own influences, experiences and love of books. We are happy for you to make your answers as long or as brief as you are comfortable with and we will undertake not to edit or paraphrase any of your comments without your explicit permission.

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

**I remember reading ( if looking at the illustrations and recalling the story that had been read to me counts as reading) a picture book called Kingcup Cottage ( by Racey Helps, published by Medici - I know this because I tracked it down many, many years later) when I was still in my cot. So that's a pretty early memory. Words came later. But the pictures stuck. Finding a copy of Kingcup Cottage many years later was astonishing because I hadn't a clue what the story was about, but when I looked at the illustrations, they were instantly familiar.**

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

**There was no single moment of inspiration. A life of being alone ( only child) probably helped. A wish to express the pictures inside my head, probably helped too. I hadn't set out to be an illustrator or a writer, in fact I applied to do astrophysics at St Andrews university, but due to personal circumstances that went completely out of control, I never went there, didn't get the required grades and headed off in a completely different trajectory to the one that had been mapped out for me at school. Hurrah!**

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

**Successful? A picture/book that strikes a chord with a reader. Something that chimes with their own experience. But also something that makes them able to**

**completely empathise with a person or viewpoint which was, prior to reading/ seeing the picture/book, completely unknown and not understood. Something that stirs their emotions, incites passion, makes them breathless, makes the reader want to grab the nearest person to them and say - LOOK! THIS!**

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

**Me. I write and draw for me. If it works for me, then I'm in a better place to argue that it might be published. I have to believe in my work, have to love it before I can possibly hope to persuade anyone else to do so.**

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

**I think the physical book is going to be around for a long time. While we have trees, and the means to turn them into paper. And even in a post-apocalyptic world or one of the myriad dystopias projected by some of our finest writers, I think books would still have a very important place.**

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

**Yes. My partner and I have well over ten thousand books, taking up most of the wall space in our house. A special book I'd love to own? Something written by Iain M Banks from beyond the grave. Now that would be very special indeed. I still can't believe that there won't be any more of his fabulous stories.**

Thank you very much for taking time to do this for us. We will advise you when we publish it on the website - [www.letterpressproject.co.uk](http://www.letterpressproject.co.uk). Please return the completed interview to:

**Karen Argent**

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