



**The Letterpress Project**

**Author and Illustrator E-Interviews**

# **An Interview With**

## **P.R.Ellis**

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

My earliest book memories are Noddy (Enid Blyton) and Rupert Bear annuals. Then I got into Biggles Books by Capt. W. E. Johns. The Rescue Flight was the first I had I think and I re-read it many times. Biggles was looked down on by my grammar school English teacher, for one, but I loved the descriptions of flying, the camaraderie between Biggles and his colleagues and the descriptions of foreign lands (in the later "peacetime" stories). I got into SF at the age of about 10 and soon read all the SF in the children's section of our local library. They wouldn't let me use the adult section till I was 14 so I devoured all the Jules Verne in the Foreign Literature section.

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

Difficult to say. I read and read as a teenager and got into jotting my own little stories down (SF). That continued and while I was working (teaching), writing became a form of relaxation. Seeing my name on the cover of a book became an ambition and I first achieved that with a science textbook (not counting my M.Phil thesis).

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

A good novel has an original idea or approach to a situation, believable characters, and clear but not excessive description. What makes a *successful* book seems to be often a good slice of luck.

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

Not really, although I realise that that is probably a failing. Write to the market people say. I write my Jasmine Frame novels for people who enjoy crime stories and I hope the transgender element makes them a bit different (as well as educating the reader). My September Weekes fantasy series is aimed at Young Adults (and above) but is really just telling a story made up of elements that interest 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 think the paper book has a secure future for the time being. When e-books became the thing a few years back I thought paperbacks were on the way out but it seems that a lot of older people (i.e. over 35) who grew up with paper books, still love them. I use both but apart from the weight of some novels these days I think I prefer turning a physical page. Younger people who have grown up with screens are different, I think. I'm not even sure how much they actually read novels. So, in the long term, I think the days of paper are coming to an end.

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

Not especially, but I have a (too big) book collection. I have a lot of SF novels including complete or almost complete collections of certain authors e.g. Iain (M) Banks. I do also buy scientific biographies and old science, especially chemistry, books. If I could have any book then an original publication by one of my heroes – Humphry Davy, Michael Faraday, etc. would be something special. Also, the next Culture novel by Iain M Banks would be extra special since he's dead.