

Peter Bently

Peter's father was an army bandmaster, so his family moved around a lot when he was growing up. He went to ten different schools and lived in Germany, Devon, Staffordshire, Singapore, Northumberland, Hampshire and Hong Kong, where he completed his A-Levels.

His earliest reading memories are dominated by the Beano, the Dandy and Enid Blyton – particularly Noddy. In Devon, when he was about seven and his brother ten, they used to put on comedy shows in their garage, to which they would invite the editor of the Beano but he always wrote back a very nice letter declining their invitation, often enclosing a picture especially drawn for them with Dennis the Menace or Biffo the Bear saying "Hello John and Peter, sorry we can't come to your show!"

When he was nine in Singapore there was a shop that sold English books but for children it had the whole Enid Blyton Mystery series and little else. He bought one Mystery a week with his pocket money until he owned all fifteen. Then back in England he became a fan of the Narnia books and Tolkien.

He is particularly inspired by the natural world, myth and folklore and likes writers with quirky humour, sensitivity, and a slight sense of mischief. He admires Roald Dahl for his clarity and ability not to put adults on pedestals and Michael Morpurgo for his sensitivity. Among writers of children's stories in verse, he thinks that Dr Seuss and Julia Donaldson are wonderfully inventive. Among the classic authors, he likes AA Milne also for his clarity and his wonderful understanding of children's minds and Lewis Carroll, Edward Lear and Hilaire Belloc.

He lives in the writer-filled town of Totnes with his wife and a perfect ready-made audience of two young children. He enjoys visiting schools and sharing his writing.