

GUPPY SCHOOL: Author Events with BEVERLEY BIRCH

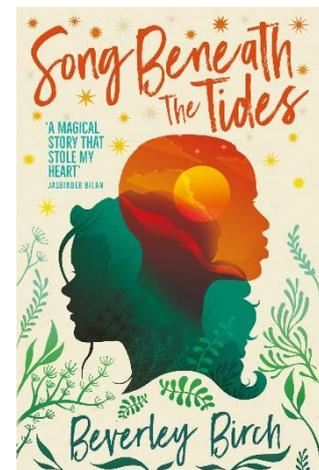
I spent my childhood roaming vast plains and deep forests near my home in East Africa, dreaming of becoming an intrepid explorer in fantastic, far-away places. Instead I've become a writer, and explore people and places through my books. I've travelled widely, and wherever I go, I'm fascinated by how people and events of the past seem to leave a gleam, or a shadow in a place. In a way, that's where all my stories begin.

My novels range over time-travel, mystery-thrillers, ghost stories, and adventures and are set in Italy, Scotland and East Africa. I also write picture books, biographies, narrative non-fiction, retellings of folk tales and classic works, and collaborations with my husband, photographer Nick Birch. I've been nominated for the Carnegie medal, and shortlisted for awards here and abroad. ***Song Beneath the Tides*** has been critically acclaimed and is currently longlisted for the Amazing Book Awards.



I've been in children's publishing, on both sides of the fence, for many years, running my writing life alongside commissioning and editing children's fiction. I first joined Penguin in 1975 to edit adult nonfiction, but moved immediately to the children's list, and found my true home. I've been three times shortlisted for the Branford Boase Award in recognition of the editor's role in nurturing new talent, and have worked with many outstanding and award winning writers. I'm an experienced speaker at conferences, festivals and school events for children and adults, and provide workshops and creative support for young writers of all ages, in schools and through CWISL festivals (see below), and to new adult children's writers at festivals and through The Golden Egg Academy.

I founded **Children's Writers and Illustrators for Stories and Literacy (CWISL)** a well-known group of published and award-winning writers who provide events and festivals for young people to encourage reading and writing (for which we are now repeatedly receiving funding including from Arts Council England. (In 2021 there are two virtual festivals, funded by Arts Council England and Hillingdon Community Trust) www.cwisl.org.uk



Song Beneath The Tides
Hardback - Age: Young Adult
Price: £12.99 - ISBN: 978 1 913101 077



Endorsements:

“A big thanks – the students were so enthusiastic and engaged by your talk, and found it an eye-opener (including some usually very resistant to enthusiasm!)” **Teacher, Norwood School.**

“The audience was captivated. A very informative talk and lots of things to do. I too found it extremely interesting.” **Teacher, Broxbourne School**

“I enjoyed every single moment. Beverley helped us a lot. She was very kind and encouraging.” **Student, ShoutWest! Creative Writing Festival**

“Thankyou so much for your fantastic workshops today, the classes really enjoyed themselves and learnt a lot.” **Community Librarian, Medway Libraries**

ABOUT MY EVENTS

ONLINE EVENTS

Format: Three pre-recorded videos (10-15 minutes each). Designed to be screened in succession. These can be stopped at any point (and there will be suggestions) for discussion/activities.

- VIDEO 1: Introduction to me, my writing, and ***Song Beneath the Tides*** - how I came to write it, my childhood and experiences in Africa, plus some short readings from the book.
- VIDEO 2: the inspirations behind the book, and its themes: including lots of visuals.
 - inspiration and background to the historical/ghost theme: Portuguese explorations, colonialism, forts (eg Fort Jesus), ancient Swahili cities and their ruins (eg Gede), legend.
 - land grabbing by big business interests, court cases and environmental/community struggles: impact of tourism
 - conservation, animal poaching, wildlife in East Africa.
- VIDEO 3: creative writing idea and how to develop it, prompted by ***Song Beneath the Tides***.
- PLUS A FINAL VIDEO recorded after the above 3 videos have been used, answering students questions about the book, or writing, life as a writer. If the school prefers, this could be a live zoom session. Questions to be sent in advance.

Timings: Sent as a batch to the school to be used for specific time period.

FIRST 3 VIDEOS. 10-15 mins – total of recorded material 45 mins, plus time taken for activities and/or discussion, by stopping videos. PLUS FOLLOW-UP VIDEO (see below)

Follow-up:

- Final video recorded after these 3 have been used, answering students' questions. If the school prefers, this could be a live zoom session. Questions sent in advance. 10-15 mins.
- By specific request, as an add-on, I can respond to students' writing (wearing my editor hat).

REAL-LIFE EVENTS

Format: Live visit: can also incorporate some of the prerecorded material described above.



Timings: Visits: 45 mins-2 hours/ or half-day/full-day depending on whether the creative writing option is also wanted/how many sessions.

- Live events are interactive, in the style of a conversation **not** a presentation. Time throughout for questions and answers as we go.
- The session introduces me, my writing, and ***Song Beneath the Tides*** - how I came to write it, my childhood and experiences in Africa, plus some short readings from the book.
- What inspired the book, its themes: including lots of visuals/ physically handed out or video – as school prefers. (see under online events above and schools resources below)
- Creative writing idea and how to develop it, prompted by ***Song Beneath the Tides***.

RESOURCES

Fuller details to be provided separately (agreed date 1/4): will include summaries, visuals and links to useful websites to illuminate:

- inspiration and background to the historical/ghost theme: Portuguese explorations, colonialism, forts (Fort Jesus in particular, ancient Swahili cities and their ruins (Gede in particular), legend.
- land grabbing by big business interests, court cases and environmental/community struggles in general: impact of tourism
- conservation, animal poaching, wildlife in East Africa.
- creative writing ideas prompted by ***Song Beneath the Tides***.

FAQ

Is there any recommended preparation for the sessions?

No: the sessions would work if ***Song Beneath the Tides*** has been read, or in advance of reading it.

What materials, if any, do the students need for the session?

Writing materials for creative writing sessions.

Are you happy to sign and send book plates for books sold?

Yes!

BOOKING

To discuss fees and booking a session please contact:

beverley@beverleybirch.co.uk