

What questions is Chris Gurney frequently asked?

Where were you born? Where do you live now?

I was born in Hamilton hospital and lived in Cambridge until I was two years old. I spent the next 6 happy years on a farm at Whananaki. Our family then moved to Kamo, Whangarei, where I eventually met and married Kevin, and our three children were born.

We moved to Auckland in 1998, which was a big change going from a small-town girl, to live (and DRIVE) in a big city. We shifted to Warkworth in 2016.

Where did you go to school? Did you have a nickname?

I began my schooling at a little country school at Whananaki.

There were two classrooms. I didn't want to start school, and once I started I didn't want to stay there, so my mum had to bribe me to go.

I was called Chrissy when I was a good girl and CHRISTINE when I was a naughty girl.

I went to Kamo Intermediate and Kamo Highschool.

What were you like in school? What is the naughtiest thing you did?

I was shy and quiet when I was young.

However, according to my High School reports I was 'scatty' and 'could do a lot better'. (Around about the time I discovered boys I think).

Probably the naughtiest thing I ever did was skip classes I didn't like.

What was your favourite book growing up?

My favourites were all the classic series like Heidi, Pollyanna, Anne of Green Gables.

I also adored any story that had magic in it. I had a black cat who was my best friend and I thought I had magical powers and that fairies lived at the bottom of the garden. (I still do.)

Who is your favourite children's author?

I don't like choosing favourites. Our Kiwi legends Dame Lynley Dodd and Margaret Mahy; Roald Dahl; Dr Seuss.

What is your favourite food/colour/movie?

I love bacon and egg breakfasts in bed.

Blue is my favourite colour.

My Dad took me to my first movie 'Mary Poppins' and I desperately wanted to be magical like her.

Who inspired you to write?

I've always enjoyed writing and my family cheered me on and actually laughed at the silly poems I wrote. Then one day my son, Jase, and I were looking at a children's picture book and he said "Mum, YOU could do this." And I thought "Maybe I could!"

How did you get started? How old were you?

I was an only child until I was nine. We lived on a farm and had no TV, no close neighbours and none of the technology you all have today. I had to use my imagination and make up things to amuse myself. I wrote my own little stories and poems and kept doing that as I grew up.

Why did you want to be a writer?

Writing has always made me happy. I mostly never know exactly how a story is going to end up, so it's a nice surprise!

How do you think up ideas?

It's fun thinking up different ways of telling a traditional story, as in the 'Kiwi Corker' books. Most of my other stories are based on experiences I've had or things I've seen. Then you add masses of imagination and oodles of exaggeration, with a good pinch of wacky, and stir it all together in a big pot. Some stories need to simmer away longer than others before they are ready.

Do you have a special place where you write?

I have my computer set up in our office, which overlooks lovely trees and bush. But if I'm working on a story, I am constantly writing in my head throughout the day and scrawling on whatever scrap of paper is handy. Because I learned ages ago that you always think you are going to remember, but if you don't write it down, POOF it vanishes into thin air.

What is the best thing about being an author?

Can I have three best things?

1. Finishing a story I really love;
2. Having that story accepted for publication;
3. Holding the newly published book for the first time.

Have you had a funny or embarrassing moment as an author?

Lots of embarrassing ones which usually involve me being very nervous in front of groups of people. Because nobody told me that when you were published you couldn't just hide at home and make everyone else promote your book!

What do you do when you are not writing?

I do school visits and other things to promote my books and meet the awesome children who read them.

I take care of my family.

I'm a good shopper!

I like doing creative things, from sewing and handwork to changing the furniture around! I'm trying to grow flowers and veges, fruit trees and chooks now I'm in Warkworth.

I love having my grand-kidlets over, and going to the beach to visit my Dad. Family is everything to me.

What would you have chosen to be if you were not an author?

A breeder of exotic cats. I have two already – Chevy, a VERY fluffy Persian, and Jemima, a Rag Doll cat.

Which famous person from the past would you like to talk to?

Dr Seuss. I'd like to see if we could have a good conversation all in rhyme!