

Alison Prince

Alison Prince is a famous author, illustrator, biographer and TV scriptwriter.

She was born in 1931 and in the 1940's attended the Beckenham County School for Girls in Lennard Road where she enjoyed grammar and Latin, but not maths. On her website, Alison writes that "I'd always thought I was going to be an artist, due largely to the fact that the Art Room in my very formal Girls' Grammar School was the only place where any self-expression was permitted."

She won a scholarship to the Slade School of Art. Completing a degree course there did not lead into art related jobs so she obtained a postgraduate teaching diploma at Goldsmith's College and then taught art at the Elliott Comprehensive School, in Putney.

Her teaching career was interrupted after she married a fellow teacher and had three children. She had a spell in journalism before running a small farm in Suffolk for eight years. Alison moved into writing for children's television, achieving fame with the pre-schoolers series Trumpton in conjunction with Brian Cant.

Below: Alison on holiday in Greece with her granddaughter



In the late 1970s, she turned to writing books for children, some based on historical characters. They include *My Royal Story* about Catherine of Aragon, which was re-released in 2010 and followed by further books about the Tudor queens. *How's Business* (1987), set in World War II, was shortlisted for the Nestle Smarties Book Prize and a thriller set in Dickensian London, *Oranges and Murder* won the Scottish Books of the Year Award, as did another book called *Second Chance*.

Between 1968 and 2011 she had 70 books published. Her updated Robin Hood story for young adults called *The Sherwood Hero*, about a girl stealing money to hand it out to the poor in the streets of Glasgow, made her the joint winner (with Philip Pullman) of the Guardian Children's Fiction Prize.

Alison wrote two well received biographies: a very affectionate story of the Scottish author Kenneth Grahame called *An Innocent in the Wild Wood* ; and the second called *The Fan Dancer* about Hans Christian Andersen.

Alison now lives on the Isle of Arran from where, when asked last year to select a piece of music for the Concert, she replied:

"What a lovely idea, to have a celebration of women! How about Handel's The Entry of the Queen of Sheba, as a suitable piece of music? It's a busy piece for whoever plays the tune, but most people will recognise it, and it's suitably cheerful."