**Helen Dennis information sheet about events**

**(AKA H L Dennis)**

Talk supported by visuals and interactive elements based around where my inspiration comes from, the life of a writer and the ideas used in my books. Talk designed to encourage creativity, curiosity and perseverance and so useful when trying to encourage children to pursue their dreams and be active learners…not just as a way of encouraging reading. Talk can be tailored to fit alongside school programmes or to focus on particular themes if required. After the talk, I am happy to give a Q&A sessionand signcopies of books. (No number restriction for talks.)

* Various workshops available as listed here

BRIEF DETAILS ABOUT WORKSHOPS:

(Workshops suitable for both Key Stage 2 and 3 adapted according to age of attendees)

SIGNS, SYMBOLS AND SECRETS

As code cracking is integral to the plot of SECRET BREAKERS, and symbols form the basis for discovery in RIVER OF INK, this session looks at code cracking challenges throughout history and how symbols are used to hide information. Interactive activities using British Sign Language and Makaton are used and reference is made to symbols in art and architecture, as well as hiding information in code. A real ‘hands on’ session!

WEAVING FACT AND FICTION

Using a range of artefacts as stimulus as well as real stories and characters from history, I look at how authors combine fact with fiction in their writing.

Reference will be made to the real characters and locations used in both SECRET BREAKERS and RIVER OF INK. Pupils will be encouraged to make their own story suggestions and work on ideas that can be developed afterwards back in the classroom, or as home learning.

MEMORY AND MYSTERY

As RIVER OF INK centres around the idea of a boy who has no memory of who he is, this workshop explores the idea of making sense of who we are using clues from belongings and possessions. Using deductive skills (rather like Sherlock Holmes) attendees will be invited in this interactive session to explore various artefacts from a suitcase and draw up a profile for a mystery character. This workshop could be used as a creative writing stimulus for future pupil work. It also develops links made to history and science skills when looking for information.

WORKSHOPS DESIGNED FOR KEY STAGE 3 STUDENTS:

ALCHEMY, AGING AND SOME VERY BIG QUESTIONS

This session looks at the history of alchemy and stories written about seeking the elixir of life. It focuses on the international quest of the pursuit to live forever, exploring the idea of alchemy versus science as well as the idea of eternal life being either a blessing or a curse. This is an ideal workshop for students wanting to discuss and debate ‘big ideas’ and how we find these ideas explored in fiction.

DIVERSITY AND DISABILITY:

Dante’s deafness in RIVER OF INK leads to sign language being used to help save the hero of the story! The inclusion of disabled people as complete characters in stories and not as token add-ons is an area ripe for discussion. This session looks atthe idea of including all types of character in fiction and asks readers to think about the value of stories to help us learn about worlds that are not our own.

ALL THE SESSIONS ARE TAILORED TO MAKE REFERENCE TO APPROPRIATE CURRICULUM

LINKS ACROSS KEY STAGE 2 OR KEYSTAGE 3.

I AM WILLING TO DISCUSS INDIVIDUAL SCHOOL NEEDS, SO DO MAKE SUGGESTIONS

ABOUT WHAT YOU WOULD LIKE COVERED. I AM ALSO WILLING TO RUN SESSIONS FOR PARENTS ABOUT THE IMPORTANCE OF READING AND WAYS TO DEVELOP THE READING HABIT.