



Special Edition

Leeds Libraries

2026

"How am I to sing your praise,
Happy chimney-corner days,
Sitting safe in nursery nooks
Reading picture story-books?"

R. L. Stevenson

Some Favourite Authors

Tom Palmer



Each copy of The Chimney Corner began with a spotlight on an author, often an interview through letters. There was only one author we had in mind... award-winning Leeds legend, Tom Palmer. Tom was a reluctant reader as a child and says picking up articles about football got him into reading. He is now the multi-award-winning author of many books for young readers. In 2019 Tom was awarded the National Literacy Trust's Ruth Rendell Award in recognition of his significant contribution to literacy work in the UK.



Rosebank
Primary School

Interview with Tom Palmer

Questions submitted from Years 5 and 6 at Rosebank Primary School.

Which is your favourite book you've written and why?

Armistice Runner. The main character, Lily, is based loosely on my daughter and, in fact, the girl on the cover is her, too. So I love it.

If you had to choose football or reading for the rest of your life, which would you choose and why?

Tough question. But... I... it... reading... I'd choose reading. Then I'd follow soccer.

What advice would you give about becoming a successful author?

Write about what you like talking about. Borrow books from the library and decide what you like and don't like. (I did this at Leeds Central Library.) Don't give up. And be as much you as you can be.

How did you get the idea for Over the Line?

It was someone else's idea. They

told me about Jack. Half my books are my wife's idea. She is cleverer than me and knows things more, too.

Why did you decide to become an author instead of a football player?

Ha ha. I never thought I'd be a footballer. I was okay. But knew I didn't have what it takes. But I felt like that about being a writer too, then...

Explain how you felt when your first book was published.

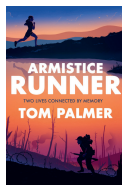
I can't. It's really hard to put it into words. It was nearly as good as when Leeds won the league in '92 and the day I met my wife.

What is your favourite genre to read vs write?

Right now... I like nature writing. Stuff about birds and moss and mountains. To write... historical fiction.

If you could meet any book character (from your own or someone else's), who would it be and why?

Audrey Hepburn, who is the main character in my book, Resist.



Mary Maud Hummerston – Fun Facts

She started her career in Armley Library in 1910 and in 1912 she became the 'Official Storyteller'.

She had her own BBC radio show in the 1920s for children and she was known as "Auntie Norah", but was asked to leave because some listeners didn't like her Yorkshire accent!!!

She became the first female Librarian in Leeds in 1927 and went on to write 'The Chimney Corner' magazine.



She is so inspiring we have named a room at City Library after her, called The Hummerston Suite, where we will host events for children and young people.

Story & Rhyme Sessions at Leeds Libraries

Monday

10:30–11:30 – Dewsbury Road, Pudsey, Whinmoor, Headingley

13:30–14:30 – Central Library, Oakwood

Tuesday

10:30–11:30 – Beeston, Halton, Hunslet, Moor Allerton, Morley, Story Bus (Belle Isle)

13:30–14:30 – Bramley, Story Bus (Beeston Hill)

Wednesday

10:30–11:30 – Ardsley and Tingley, Calverley, Reginald Centre, Garforth, Guiseley, Horsforth, Otley, Rothwell, Story Bus (Gipton)

13:30–14:30 – Story Bus (Farnley)

Thursday

10:30–11:30 – Armley, Central, Chapel Allerton, Holt Park, Kippax, St George's Centre, Seacroft, Story Bus (Holbeck), Wetherby, Yeadon

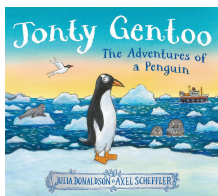
13:30–14:30 – Story Bus (Halton Moor)

Friday

10:30–11:30 – Compton Centre, Crossgates

13:30–14:30 – Farsley

2026 Books to Read



Julia Donaldson and Dav Pilkey are amongst the top issuing children's authors at Leeds Libraries in 2026. With **Cat Kid** and **Jonty Gentoo** being the most popular so far this year.

Murder for Two and **Go-Man** won the Leeds Book Awards 2026, in the Middle Grade Graphics and Fiction categories, which was voted for by children across the city!



Put Your Record On by Leeds-born star Corinne Bailey Rae, is a big hit. Corinne launch this book at an event at Leeds Libraries earlier this year. Jeffrey Boakye is a firm favourite with his **Kofi** series and will be visiting schools in Leeds this autumn as part of a special Summer Reading Challenge prize. For younger readers, **The Big Time Boogie-Woogie Animal Band** was voted top by library staff for our Story & Rhyme Mini Challenge. All these books are from the Read to the Beat Summer Reading Challenge 2026 book collection.



Here are three top picks for 2026 by our Children's Librarian Team; Heather recommends **Hupo**, Steph loves reading **Bunnies in a Rocket** on the Story Bus and Matt has been enjoying **Ning and the Night Spirits**.



Sign up for a Leeds Libraries card today, if you have not already. Borrow books for free and fall in love with reading as a family.

