



Paul Shipton

Paul Shipton grew up in Manchester, and went to university in Cambridge. He spent several years teaching English as a Foreign Language (living in Istanbul for a year). In 1991, he became an editor at Usborne Publishing, working on science activity books for children. Later that year he moved to Ginn & Co in Aylesbury, where he was an editor of primary school English materials.

Immersed in the field of publishing for children, it is perhaps not surprising that Paul eventually became a published author himself. But this was not a life-long ambition, as Paul explains:

"I'm really not sure that I wanted to be a writer when I was growing up. I did read quite a bit, but I think I wanted to be the characters in the books – footballer, Viking, space-cadet, whatever I happened to be reading. At some point I suppose my ambitions changed – a good thing really, as I am a lousy footballer and I have been known to be seasick."

One day, Paul was sitting in his back garden watching some insects fighting. The violent battle between such tiny creatures set his imagination going. What a great setting the garden could be! How about a detective story – not set in a typical urban jungle, but set in a backyard jungle inhabited by insects? Bug Muldoon, private investigator and beetle, was about to be born!

"I had a vague idea that I wanted

to write a story about animals which weren't cute and cuddly, and were totally different from people," says Paul. "I was trying to think of story ideas and the name of Bug Muldoon popped into my head. I had always liked the 'hard boiled' style of detective books by writers like Raymond Chandler, and the name struck me as right for that kind of character. I just put the two together."

Just before Paul's first novel, *Bug Muldoon and the Garden of Fear*, was published in 1996 by Oxford University Press (OUP), Paul moved to Chicago in the USA with his wife, Vicky, and two daughters, Megan and Emma. The family lived in Chicago for a few years, then moved to Wisconsin where Paul now works as a freelance editor and writer.



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He says that although he is enjoying life there, moving has made him realise how British he really is: he finds himself pining for things like British crisps, soap operas, villages, pubs and double-decker buses.

A second Bug Muldoon novel, *Bug Muldoon and the Killer in the Rain*, was published by OUP in 2001. In this adventure, Bug has to find out exactly who the killer in the rain is – and this means a treacherous trip to the House, where the Humans live.

Paul's other novels include *The Mighty Skink* and *The Man Who Was Hate* (published by OUP) and *The Pig Scrolls* and *The Pig Who Saved the World* (published by Puffin).

The opening chapter of *Bug Muldoon and the Garden of Fear* is available as a Group Reading Leaflet in the September 2006 issue of *Literacy Time* for Years 3 and 4 – Creepy Crawlies. The book is also the subject of a Literacy Time/OUP Reader Offer (closing date Tuesday 31 October 2006).

