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Press release

My book Tail-End Charlie (published by Frances Lincoln 4th September 2008) is about my dad's time as an air gunner in the RAF with 180 squadron 2nd TAF in 1944. He told me about his adventures when I was a boy of 8, 9, 10; 11 and they came out in dribs and drabs – at bath time or during car journeys.

It's taken me a few years to sort it all out in my head and write the war stories down because I wanted to do it with him speaking the words – as I remember them all those years ago. My father became a headmaster after the war. He survived flak and German night fighters only to tragically die at only 52 from a heart attack while at work. He loved children and I know he would have wanted to tell my kids and his six other grandchildren these, and many other stories himself. So I've tried to do it for him.

I traced dad's pilot and navigator a few years ago and found them both living in New Zealand. They wrote me good long letters, full of information about those far away days... it was good to see the stories mirrored my dad's! There were some I hadn't heard too so I added a few of those to fill in the gaps because I wanted it to be a true story but also to work as a non fiction children's book by following my dad from RAF training to his last mission when he was wounded. I also was contacted by another pilot from 180 squadron Dick Levy via the 180/2nd TAF Veterans association. Mr Levy was a mine of information and had even published his own wartime memoirs, which he kindly shared with me.

It was hard writing a children's book about war – but I had my dad's stories to follow.

He got the balance right between humour and tragedy, so I listened to his voice in my head. He began with Wellingtons before going to 180 and Melsbroek. He talked a lot about everyday life at Melsbroek as well as flying op's and losing mates . . . He was hit by flak himself bombing tank supply depots on the 23rd December during the Battle of the Bulge. So while Tail – End Charlie is my dad's own unique World War Two story it shares common elements with millions of people's wartime experience; Adventure, death, survival and love. *Love* because when Charlie was recuperating he was given an RAF desk job back in England in 1945 – he met my mum, a WAAF wireless operator





Mick Manning and Brita Granström.

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Quite a lot of our books are published in the Netherlands, mostly by Ploegsma.

AWARDS etc:

1996 Winner. Smarties Silver Award. The World's Full of Babies!

1997 Winner. TES Award. What's under the Bed?

1998 Shortlisted for Rhone Poulenc Science prize. Yum-Yum!,

1999 Shortlisted for Rhone Poulenc Science prize. How Did I Begin?

1999 Shortlisted for Rhone Poulenc Science prize. Science School.

2000 Winner. English Association Award. Wash, Scrub, Brush!

2004 Shortlisted. The Blue Peter Awards. What's My Family Tree

2005 Winner. English Association Award Voices of the Rainforest

2005 Shortlisted English Association Award. Roman Fort

2007 Shortlisted Royal Society Junior Science Prize. My Body Book

2007 Shortlisted English Association Award. Viking Longship

2008 Winner. English Association Award. Greek Hero
2008 Yuck featured in Mike Leigh's film Happy Go Lucky

Mick & Brita's books are translated in many languages including:
French, Dutch, Danish, Japanese, Chinese, Korean, German, French,
Swedish, Mexican and Brazilian.

BIOGRAPHICAL AND CRITICAL SOURCES IN RECENT PERIODICALS:

Books for Keeps. Author-graph July 2005

English Association Magazine Interview 2006

UKLA mini book 24. Active Encounters. Margaret Mallett 2007
pages 13 & 15

English 4 - 11 Magazine July 2007 issue

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