

2007/July GARTH NIX - Publishing News

When HarperCollins published Garth Nix's *Sabriel* here in the UK in 2001 it was the start of a programme that has seen some fifteen years-worth of work, already out in the US and Australia, appear in a third of that time. "It looks like I've been incredibly prolific," says Nix, who will be back for the Bath Festival of Children's Literature in September, "but in actual fact that's not the case at all."

The main thrust, recently, has been Arthur Penhaligon's ongoing saga in the *Keys to the Kingdom*, which kicked off in 2004 with *Mister Monday*. "With this series the UK is, give or take a week or two, publishing simultaneously now; the sixth title, *Superior Saturday*, comes out next year and the whole cycle finishes with *Lord Sunday* in March 2009 - all being well," Nix raps the table with his knuckles, "knock on wood..."

Does he know how the series ends, or is he, like his legion of fans, waiting to find out himself? "I've always known the big picture and the landmarks of how to get there, what I haven't known is what's in between. I do know the ending - I've written part of it already, as well as little bits and pieces ahead of where I am - but I still don't know exactly how it all comes together, which is all part of the fun. It'd be boring if it was all utterly plotted out, but occasionally I do have my doubts and wonder how I'm going to get myself out of something."

With the end of a major series in sight, this would be the time to ask: what is coming next? "I believe HarperCollins have finalised negotiations with LucasFilm for *The Seventh Tower* books, which I don't actually own...they were commissioned by LucasFilm and published in the US in 2000 by Scholastic, who had suggested me as the author. I originally said no to the project, because I didn't want to have to write books where there was a studio exec telling me there had to be a camp fire scene on page twenty, but ultimately they offered me more money - which I needed for a much more imposing wedding than I would otherwise have been able to afford. They also said they wouldn't interfere, so eventually I cracked."

With *The Seventh Tower* publishing next year, that brings the story well and truly up to date on the books which have come before. What Nix is working on now is a new YA novel. “You could call it a sci-fi/space opera/fantasy, set in a galactic empire. At the moment it’s title is *A Confusion of Princes*, and right now it’s a standalone...I’ve described it as David Copperfield meets *Star Wars*, but it’s morphed over time as I write it. Given that it’s partially written, and I’m working in it, that’s probably the next big novel, although I have other things in various stages - like the graphic novel adaptations of *The Old Kingdom* books.” The man just never stops...