



**Scoilnet interviews Brian Keaney author of Jacob's Ladder and other fiction.**

**Q: What inspired you to write Jacob's Ladder?**

A: Jacob's Ladder began as a dream. In the dream I seemed to wake up without any idea of where I was or how I'd got there. But, unlike Jacob, I wasn't in the middle of a field. I was underground and it was dark. Then I began to hear a soft, shuffling noise that was gradually getting louder. A light appeared and I saw a great crowd of people. One of them was holding up a candle and they were walking very slowly towards me. I was terrified. Then I woke up. I couldn't stop thinking about that dream and over the next week or two it started to turn into the story of Jacob's Ladder.

**Q: How did your career as an author begin?**

A: I went on holiday to Morocco when I was nineteen and got dreadfully ill. I was lying in the same hotel room for days on end, too weak to move. There was nothing to read except a magazine that someone had left there. I read that magazine from cover to cover. There was a short story in it and I must have read it half a dozen times. After a while, I began to see how the story was made. I no longer lost myself in the characters and events; instead I started to notice the structure. I thought to myself, 'I could write a story like this,' and I made up my mind that if I ever got back home I'd do just that and send it to the same magazine. Well I did get back home and I wrote a story and sent it away. A couple of weeks later they sent me a letter offering me seventy five pounds. In those days seventy-five pounds was a lot of money

**Q: Where do you do most of your writing?**

A: I do most of my writing in my study at my computer but I do a lot of my thinking on the hillside above my mother's house in North West Leitrim. I listen to the wind sighing through the heather and let the stories grow in my mind.

**Q: What was your favourite book as a kid?**

A: Well, it depends on what age. Two of my favourite books at primary school were Alice's Adventures In Wonderland by Lewis Carroll and The Magician's Nephew by C S Lewis.

**Q: Are any of your characters based on yourself?**

A: All my characters have something of myself in them. When I set about creating a character I deal with the obvious stuff first. What do they look like? Where do they live? Then I start creating a personality for my character? Maybe they are greedy, or kind, or ambitious? Finally, I add the magic ingredient - a tiny bit of myself. It might be an experience, a memory, a characteristic, a hope or a dream. It doesn't need to be much. But it's that little bit of me that brings the character to life.

