

**PRESS RELEASE. . .PRESS RELEASE. . .PRESS RELEASE...**

## **ACCLAIMED CHILDREN'S AUTHOR HARRY HORSE DIES 1960 – 2007**

Children's author Harry Horse (né Richard Horne) was found dead alongside his wife of sixteen years, Mandy Horne, at their home in the village of Papil on Burra Isle, Shetland on Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> January 2007. The couple's bodies were discovered lying together in their remote bungalow after an apparent suicide pact. Mandy Horne had been suffering from multiple sclerosis.

Author of such well-loved children's books as *The Last Polar Bears* which was made into a half hour television special featuring the voice of actor Nigel Hawthorne and *The Last Gold Diggers* which won the Smarties Children's Book Gold Award, Harry's work was his latest work was the Little Rabbit series of picture books. With illustrations reminiscent of Ernest Shepard the Little Rabbit books have enchanted young children and won acclaim and success in the UK and the USA. His work has been translated widely including into German, French and Japanese. *Little Rabbit Lost* won the Scottish Arts Council Children's Book of the Year Award in 2003.

A devotee of Cajun music, Harry formed two bands Swamptrash and Hexology both of which enjoyed cult status. It was during a Swamptrash gig that Harry met his wife Mandy.

Mandy Suhr, Picture Book Publisher for Puffin said, *'I feel extremely privileged to have had the opportunity to work with Harry Horse as his picture book publisher. A hugely talented illustrator and writer, Harry spent the last few years focusing on a series of beautifully crafted picture books featuring, Little Rabbit, an endearing 'every child' facing the trials of growing up. The stories both pull at the heart-strings and make you laugh out loud, brilliantly capturing the nature of human behaviour. This is one of Harry's greatest gifts, and although set in a nostalgic world, the stories speak directly to the modern child and parent.'*

*Harry's wife Mandy was his collaborator and played an enormous part in the creation of the books. Roo and Chiquita, their much-loved dogs, and the beautiful landscape of Burra also provided great inspiration. Last year was extremely difficult for Harry as he struggled to work and care for Mandy through her serious illness, so I was amazed and delighted when Little Rabbit's Christmas, the fifth in the series, landed on my desk. It is so very sad to think that this will be Harry's last book, but in true 'Harry style' it is extraordinary and perfect - a fitting tribute to Harry and Mandy. I shall miss him enormously.'*

Yvonne Hooker, Harry's fiction publisher and Senior Editor at Puffin said, *'All of us here at Puffin are shocked and saddened by the news of Harry's death. It was in 1992 that a knotted parcel of tea-stained paper arrived in our slush pile – it was the manuscript of The Last Polar Bears and it heralded the arrival of an exceptional talent in the world of children's books, one which has graced and delighted readers of all ages ever since.'*

*I was Harry's fiction editor for ten years at Puffin, and was privileged to work on three of the Roo books with him. How wonderful to be the first reader of Roo and Grandfather's amazing journeys into worlds that only Harry could have dreamed up. I truly believe he was a genius. We shall miss him terribly, but we are absolutely sure that his books will carry on delighting children for many years to come.'*

**Ends.**

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