

EPISODE 129: HOW TO SELF-PUBLISH AND MARKET A CHILDREN'S BOOK PART 2 – WITH KAREN INGLIS

Speaker 1: Two writers, one just starting out, the other a best seller. Join James Blatch and Mark Dawson and their amazing guests, as they discuss how you can make a living telling stories. There's never been a better time to be a writer.

James Blatch: Hello and welcome to the Self Publishing Formula Podcast, with Mark and James, and part two of our look at children's books. But this should be of value to you regardless of your genre, because it's all about digital marketing.

I promise I'm not going to talk about football, 'cause it's all done and dusted now. We have no idea. This is the 6th of July we're recording this. Glory could be now covering the United Kingdom, particularly England, or it could be a hangover. Let's just park that, and deal with this, as the narrative unfolds in the future.

Mark and I will be back from New York, and I hope you joined us in America. We were really looking forward to it from where we are now. It's very difficult talking about the past tense from the past. That's got to be a new language. I think Douglas Adams did invent a new language, because of all the time travel in his book of he went there to do what happened, or something.

Mark Dawson: You're floundering.

James Blatch: I'm not floundering. I'm exploring narrative in language.

Mark Dawson: I can basically see the cogs wearing in your brain.

James Blatch: Yeah, and it's still early morning.

Mark Dawson: Slowly. Keep going. Drink some coffee.

James Blatch: Okay. We've got this focus on children's books, and we had a great interview from Laurie Wright in Canada last year, last week, I should say. You're right. There is a floundering going on.

Today, it's Karen Inglis, who's across the pond in the United Kingdom. Lives in London, and Karen has been plugging away children's books for a few years.

She's done a lot of the things that Laurie talked about, in terms of the children's visits, school visits, and so on. Library readings. But she has also had a breakthrough, and we caught up with her at the London Book Fair.

It was great to speak to Karen, 'cause we've known her a couple of years, but her face, you can see, is kind of lit up now, because things have started to take off for her properly. She can fulfill that dream of earning her living through writing.

Again, spoiler alert. It's AMS adds, more than Facebook adds and more than YouTube, et cetera, and Book Pub, even. It's AMS that has been the key breakthrough for her. Let's talk to Karen, and Mark and I will have a chat off the back.

We're tucked away in a little corner of the London Book Fair. Actually, coincidentally, it is kind of children central, the sales around here are of children's books and stuff. Which is coincidentally all sort of planned. We'll pretend it's planned.

Karen Inglis, welcome to the SPF Podcast. How lovely to have you on here.

Karen Inglis: How lovely to be here. I regularly listen when I'm in the gym, during my exercise.

James Blatch: Very pleased to hear you're looking after mind and body. You are a regular in the SPF community. You've been around for a few years. As a matter of fact, we met you here probably three years ago, I think, maybe. First time.

Karen Inglis: I actually was here when the Alliance of independent authors launched. I was here as well then. That's when I really got to know the community of self publishing writers.

James Blatch: Fantastic. Well, it's brilliant to have you on the podcast. The reason we've got you on is to talk to you, specifically, about children's books. It is one of those very often asked questions, particularly of Mark.

People will listen to the podcast. They'll look at the materials, and the courses, and they'll say, "Does this work for children's books?" We know that the answer is that a lot of the principles are the same, and there are specific challenges with children's books marketing, aren't there? That's what we want to talk about.

Why don't we start by you telling us a little bit about your publishing.

Karen Inglis: My publishing? I first self-published *The Secret Lake*, which continues, by the way, to be my best seller, back in 2011. I'd written it many, many years before, and stuck it in a box.

I did that thing of sending it off to traditional publishers, and them coming back and saying it's too traditional. It's the long length. It's this and it's that. Nice story, but, so it went back in the box for 10 years. I'm a professional writer by day.

James Blatch: How many of those messages did you get? Do you remember?

Karen Inglis: I'm not very patient, so I think about seven or eight. I didn't send it very far and wide before, and there were a couple of other things I had. I just thought, actually, I could be at this all day.

I'm going to go back to the day job where I get paid for my writing. My kids were very small, when I did that writing, to begin with. It was a time when I was at home more. But I took a sabbatical from my consultancy work in 2010.

When I started looking around, I thought, "Well, I must put out those stories from my wooden box," 'cause what a shame. I used to look at the box and say, "Oh, what a shame. No one's ever going to know the story of the secret lake. What a pity. No one's going to know about Ferdinand Fox and the Hedgehog."

When I pulled them out, and started looking, I'd think, "yeah, these are good, but they need some more editing."

Then, I went online, and I discovered people talking about Create Space. The more research I did, the more I realized, actually, I could do this myself. There's nobody I could see in the UK doing children's publishing. There's someone called Joanna Penn living over in Australia who's doing it who seems to be English. That confused me.

Anyway, I did huge amounts of research in the Create Space forum, and decided I would do it myself. The first thing I released was the Kindle, sorry, was The Secret Lake in print and on Kindle. That was in the very, very early days when none of the tools were around to help you create your MOBI files.

James Blatch: Probably why, CreateSpace were pre-Amazon when they were their own company.

Karen Inglis: I think they were joined up with Amazon at that time, because there was a Create Space store. I don't know.

James Blatch: All right.

Karen Inglis: I don't know what the background was, but all I do know was it was a very lonely road at the time. There were mostly adults doing self-publishing, and certainly no children's self-publishing in the UK. That's where it all began.

As I was doing it, I created my blog called self-publishing adventures dot com, where I was sort of recording what I was doing for my own benefit as much as other people's.

James Blatch: To help other people. All those pioneers, back in the day, as they say.

Karen Inglis: Yes, yes, back in the day.

James Blatch: Even though it was really only about five minutes ago, in the grand scheme

Karen Inglis: I know.

James Blatch: But that's how it is in self-publishing, where things move quickly.

Karen Inglis: Yeah, yeah.

James Blatch: Today, Karen, you've got a reasonable handle on the challenges of children's books. It is different from fiction books. You often look at people writing romance and thrillers, and think you have it easy.

Karen Inglis: Yeah, well, do I think that, do you mean?

James Blatch: Do you think that?

Karen Inglis: Yes. I don't think you have it easy, in terms of the writing. It's difficult for everybody. In terms of the process for creating your books, it's no different whether you're a children author or not.

Obviously, if you're doing picture books, you've got to get your head around the whole color picture book side of things, in images, and all that kind of thing, which again, is a lot easier today than it used to be when I first started doing this.

But the biggest challenge, and the biggest difference for self-publishing children's books is compared with self-publishing adult books is getting your book into your readers' hands. The principal reason for that is that your buyer is not the reader. Your buyer is the reader's parents.

I think what I'm very jealous of, and I keep thinking to myself I should write young adults, is that you don't get that impulse buys that you will get if you suddenly do a deal, or if you run some Facebook ads, and target people.

They might take a punch on you, if they haven't heard of you if you're an adult. I think it's far less likely with children's authors, partly because apart from anything else, a lot of children's book buying, A, well, it happens in print, but that doesn't stop you advertising it in print on Facebook, for example, but B, parents often buy based on personal recommendation from their own kids, from other parents.

So it's far less likely they're going to just say, "Well, that looks like a good book. I'll buy it for my child." As it were. It's more of a challenge.

Yeah, most definitely. It's another layer to get through. As a result of that, and as a result of the fact that most children read in print, most children

under 12 read in print, not on e-books, my experience is you need to go out and meet those children.

You need to go out and do school events, face to face events, book signings, and book shops, that kind of thing. Which is fantastic. I love doing it. It's a lot of work, setting it up, getting into schools, creating your brand, getting known.

There's no quick win, on that front. You've got to really enjoy it. You've got to really believe in yourself, and you have to be prepared to put a huge amount of work into that.

James Blatch: Already, we can see some quite stark differences in the way that a lot of fiction books were marketed. 'Cause I think a lot of fiction writers will no longer do physical appearances, and book tours, and so on.

They're quite well understood to be time heavy, and not particularly returning value very well, whereas in your line, it is important to get yourself there.

Does Facebook advertising simply not work at all for children's books, or is it something that has a place?

Karen Inglis: It might have a place. It might be that I didn't quite find the right place, but I do know that when I tried it, Facebook just ate my money. It really did. I don't use it anymore.

I did try it way back in the early days, before when Facebook advertising first became available, back in 2012 or 11 or 13 or something. I can't remember when. I tried some little ads. But I just found it's too easy for it to eat, eat, eat up your money.

That's not to say I won't try it again. Now, I've got a wider range of books. Maybe, I'm a bit more savvy about it. But I know from talking to other

children's authors who sell a lot that other than this one I think I know where Facebook ads have worked, I just I haven't found that it's a good spend of my money.

James Blatch: What age range are your books?

Karen Inglis: They go by accident, rather than design. I write across a range of ages. I've got picture books for age three to five, six. Then, I've got chapter books for age seven to eight, and seven to 10, and then *The Secret Lake* is what they'd probably call a short middle-grade novel, which is from age eight to 11.

Actually, the great thing about that for me, just coming back to school visits, is it means that when I do a school visit, I can often see the whole school in a day.

That was a complete accident, so even though I don't write in a series, which I think coming back to the traditional ways of selling more books, in fact, it's probably very good advice for somebody, if you're going into children's writing.

If you write a series, as with adult books, you're going to sell more books. I, by accident, seem to have written across the age groups. It's also worked for me going out and doing those physical events. I think I'm starting to see now, online, that that's having some crossover, as well. I'm being smarter about advertising in the backs of the books, all the other books.

James Blatch: Because of course, children get older.

Karen Inglis: Exactly. Exactly. My latest book has just come out. *Ferdinand Fox and the Hedgehog*, which is a picture book with some fox and hedgehog facts in the book. It's selling really well, both actually online, and face-to-face.

In the back of that, I've got all the other books. It occurred to me, but actually, I could be at the beginning of their family. They've got all the different age groups, so they probably have older siblings, and things like that.

James Blatch: What's driving those online sales, do you think?

Karen Inglis: I'm doing a bit of advertising on Amazon, which I wasn't doing before. Well, I was doing it in the States, and that worked in the early days. Now, I think it's become very, very competitive.

Although I don't lose money I would say overall, I've probably broken even. But the Amazon UK advertising has really been a huge success for me, so far.

I really do think it's because The Secret Lake is such a good story. Not to brag too much, but it was considered by CBBC to be made into a, the head of Independent Commissioning read it, and recommended I send it into the BBC, and they did look at it.

When I go to school events, it's my best seller, always. As a result, I've got 46 reviews. Most of which are five stars. They're all organic. They're all very genuine.

When people find it, when they see it, and then they read about it, which AMS Advertising has allowed them to see it online, they are buying it in quite large numbers now.

James Blatch: Okay. So far, we've got physical appearances in schools, Facebook advertising, not so much.

AMS ads working. Particularly the UK ones, I'm sure only recently opened up.

Karen Inglis: I know we're recording this in advance of when it's meant to go out. Perhaps we could chat before you put it out, to see if whether that's all trailed off. I sort of don't almost don't want to jinx myself, 'cause I think, "Oh, I wonder how long this is going to last." We'll see.

James Blatch: But it's working at the moment.

What about a mailing list? Do you have a mailing list?

Karen Inglis: No

James Blatch: Just, again, the problem with not having your readers.

Karen Inglis: Yeah, well, exactly. I do have a mailing list, but actually, I've got a much bigger mailing list for my self-publishing blog.

James Blatch: Of writers?

Karen Inglis: Yeah, of writers. That's been built up gradually organically, over the years, because I have a huge number of people coming to my self-publishing blog. I do have for them, and I do have for the children's site.

I've built it through things like InstanFreebie, in the early days, which and I've quickly came to the conclusion, fairly quickly, that a lot of them just want free books, and I'm not sure what the value of that is.

I'm slowly, when I get the time, trying to find ways to expand that online mailing list by for example, having links in my book. But it's to parents. I have to couch it very much.

Before you sign up, you need to be over 13. Do you see what I mean? Again, I know it sounds pathetic, but it is such a lot of work, children's books, that finding the time to sit down and then come up with some

emails to parents that don't sound like, actually, you're just trying to sell me your kids books, is quite difficult.

I've had to focus more on getting the books out, getting my school visits sorted out.

James Blatch: Whereas the fact that the child gets older can be an advantage, in if they start with your youngest book, there's a possibility they latch onto you, as an author, and go through your series.

Karen Inglis: Yeah, as they're older. It's a moving target.

James Blatch: The problem is the parents join your list, with their children at one age.

Karen Inglis: Exactly, exactly.

James Blatch: But then it's irrelevant to them, 'cause the children are in university.

Karen Inglis: Exactly. It's a moving target. Interestingly, back in the early days, when I first did that Facebook advertising, when I think it was 2013, I remember thinking, "What if I was targeting people who say their kids are age 12? Is Facebook adjusting that every year? I've no idea."

I remember reading, in the day, well actually, if they're going to target people with eight to 12, that's only because they've volunteered that they've got kids age eight to 12. You could be missing out on a whole load of people.

But yeah, it's a moving target. It's just a different world, really, yeah, in the children's publishing.

James Blatch: And as we stand at the moment, Mr. Zuckerberg is giving testimony in Congress, and who knows whether that type of information won't be held by Facebook in the future, anyway. Then, how would our children know?

We're in a very fluid moment. There's no doubt the targeting will still be very much possible. But again, probably easier for people selling thrillers and romance, et cetera, and mystery than it is for selling children's books.

Karen Inglis: Yeah.

James Blatch: Let me ask you a little bit about the physical appearances you do, then. For some children's authors listening to this, watching this, they might be a little daunted at the prospects of turning up at a school.

How would you get the gigs, and what do you do? What do you say?

Karen Inglis: First of all, what I did originally, and I say this, and this is all going to be laid out in the book that will be coming out around the time of this podcast, is start local.

Start local. Find a school locally with, and target whichever the age group for your book is. Get in contact with them. I would probably say I wouldn't make a habit of this, but to begin with, probably offer to go in for free.

Just say, "I've got a book out. Could I come in and offer a free session with your children?" You might take a few gos to get that.

Or, actually, my first ever gig I did was in my local library. I was terrified. It was a reading of *The Secret Lake*. They put flags up, and they said, "There's tea and biscuits." They were very sweet. I was thinking, "Oh, God."

Actually, the perfect number of people turned up. There were seven children, and seven parents, and then the library and staff in the background.

It wasn't too many. There wasn't too few. It wasn't nobody. That's a good one. Local library. They often have story times.

I think what you want to do is get to know, practice first, before you think you can charge. The other interesting thing was one of the first schools that I contacted, which was local to me, which is a very high fee paying school, said, "Yes, you can come in. We won't," and of course, I said I had said I'd do it for nothing. They said, "Well, can you come in, and do a year, whatever it was?"

It turned out a year, whatever it was, two, three, had six different intakes. They wanted me to come in for six different sessions in the school library. I thought, "Well, that's a bit of a cheat."

But then, I, thought, "Actually a really good opportunity for me to practice. To see what works, and what doesn't." I had this crash course, going in, and I worked it out. Because the great thing about when you first do it, you realize actually, that reading, I need to skip there, and I need to stop there, and ask them some questions, and blah blah blah.

James Blatch: The experience of doing that regularly.

Karen Inglis: Yeah. It's like anything. You've got to make a bit of variety in there.

James Blatch: You read chapters of the book, or parts of the book, and you talk about it, as well?

Karen Inglis: I have a presentation. I have slides. I talk about being an author. I show them where I work. In my office. I show them my cat Misty. He's always walking around on top of my work.

You've got to engage with the children as well. You ask them questions about what books they like, why they like reading. Then, I will tell them a little bit about the background for whichever book it is I'm talking about. I'm presenting to them how I got the ideas for it. Show them some photos.

Then, I'll do a reading. I'll then show them how I work with my illustrator, Damir, who lives over in Bosnia. I've got some pictures of me sending him stuff back and forth, and how we came up with the covers. I mix it up.

I make it really interesting for them. Then, I always allow time for questions.

James Blatch: Inspiring a new generation of authors, as well, is as important to you as trying to sell your books, basically.

Karen Inglis: Yeah. I have a background in, A, writing. Teaching English as a foreign language. I did all that training, in terms of how you engage with an audience. You don't want it just to be I read my book, ask me some questions, then, we will go home. You've got to keep the audience engaged on different things, yeah.

James Blatch: Some real world appearances, which is a little bit different from the advice that's often given to authors where we can happily do most of our things in our pajamas, from home, but getting out there is important, if you're a children's author.

What about major appearances, as well? I'd imagine if there's any opportunity for local radio, or something that would work for you.

Karen Inglis: I've done the traditional PR, in the sense of whenever I launch the new books, I contact the local newspapers, and get articles in there. I

had them, once or twice, they've come down to the school and taken photographs.

There was one time with Ferdinand Fox and the Hedgehog, actually, where this fantastic little boy with cerebral palsy was by the end of the day, he'd written, using eye technology, he'd written a story of a fox.

James Blatch: Wow. Inspired by you.

Karen Inglis: Yeah, inspired by me. It was fantastic. I can't remember, actually, if they had come on that day, or whether I'd told them about what happened, and they asked to come down and take a photo of me with him. I can't quite remember which way around it worked. That was a few years ago.

That traditional side of things, I think it's good to do to establish your local brand, really. I'm well known now, and I've been contacted by local schools to go and do things like judge poetry competitions. I've appeared at the Children's Vegetable Festival each year, since it's been running.

They've launched three years ago the largest London children's book festival. Really big names. Jacqueline Wilson. In fact, I've got a session with them this year, in May, on self-publishing. Children's publishing.

James Blatch: You have? Awesome. Which brings me on to your book.

Karen Inglis: Yes, my book. Am I allowed to hold this up?

James Blatch: You can hold that up. But you created this yourself?

Karen Inglis: No, no, no.

James Blatch: No? Okay.

Karen Inglis: I used a professional book designer. You use a professional book designer, for your books. Rachel Lawston did that.

James Blatch: Entitled, if you people aren't necessary watching, then you be listening, the title of the book is How to Self Publish and Market a Children's Book.

Karen Inglis: Yes, exactly. Exactly, yeah.

James Blatch: Sounds like it is a fairly straightforward explanation of what the book's about.

Karen Inglis: Yeah, the biggest thing in that is the market bit, because the actual physical self-publishing side of things, in a way, that's been covered a million times by other people. I will cover it anyway, because my whole blog has always covered that, and I'm very excited by the new tools that have come around that have made a lot of that so much easier, things like Velum, for example, which obviously is for 3-books. But I go into my book when it's very important.

James Blatch: Print as well now, I think.

Karen Inglis: Yes they do print.

In fact, my Walter Brown and the Magician's Hat, which I recently changed the cover for, after I won an award, I did the print version of that using Velum, because I wanted to try it out to see how it would be.

I go into a bunch, in the book, because there are pros and cons of using Vellum for a children's book. There are certain limitations for children's authors, because with a children's author, you've got to talk about what fonts you want, and that kind of thing, and there are some design limitations with that.

Both the process of self-publishing, the key ways to do it, and then the how to market, which is really what I think a lot of authors will benefit from.

James Blatch: Yeah. It does sound like I came into this interview thinking that it is more of a challenge, and it can be to use an unromantic expression a bit of a slog.

Karen Inglis: It is, yes.

James Blatch: A constant slog. That's basically what you're saying.

Karen Inglis: It is homework.

James Blatch: It's not necessary an easy route to market. There's more physical work required.

Karen Inglis: It is. Don't give up your day job, definitely. If you can't afford to, don't give up the day job. I make money. I don't make huge amounts of money.

Although I think that with The Secret Lake taking off now, I'm not relying on the income. Put it that way. I'm lucky, in that sense.

James Blatch: You don't seem excited about AMS UK ads.

Karen Inglis: I am. Because what it does is, and obviously, I know most people watching this will know this but a few might not. But when you walk into, say, Waterstones, those tables, in the front of Waterstones, publishers pay to have the books put there.

There's no real point trying to get into those book shops, because the distribution model is quite complicated. You earn fewer royalties. Lower royalties.

But you're not going to have your book on those front shelves. Unless you have a national advertising campaign behind you, people aren't going to go and find out your book tucked away on a shelf, most likely. They're going to be going for Jacqueline Wilson.

What AMS Advertising does is it creates a level playing fiend, in that sense, because your book is just as visible as the other books. Then, it all comes down to is it a story that people want to read, and what are the reviews saying about it? I think that's where *The Secret Lake* has finally been given the attention it deserves.

James Blatch: Having a good book is obviously an important part of it.

Karen Inglis: Clearly. Yeah.

James Blatch: I'm really pleased for you and for children's authors that AMS ads are working at the moment. I know you say you don't want to jinx it, but it's this digital transformation that's made it possible for us self-publishers to find and get visibility.

Karen Inglis: Yes

James Blatch: I always think that it's a bit unfair that it's so much harder for children's authors.

Karen Inglis: Yeah. And just on the online thing, putting AMS to one side. I mean, I have done other things. There are children's websites where you can offer your book for review, and they ask you to send it out to children who will review it.

Then, the children review it through a sort of gatekeeper portal their parents were in charge of, where they stick their review on that website. That one's called Toppsta. T-O-P-P-S-T-A. I've done that, and had the reviews.

But it hasn't really affected the sales, 'cause it's a little bit like a sort of five minute wonder thing, but because the difference with AMS, the people are there buying books, anyway.

James Blatch: Yes. They're ready to buy. We should say, because most people know what AMS ads are.

Karen Inglis: I'm sorry, yeah.

James Blatch: We always get a couple of emails after saying, "Actually, what are AMS ads?" That's Amazon Marketing Services. It's Amazon's own ads platform. I know most people will know that, but not everybody. Yes, the great thing about it, as Mark has said several times, is people are already in buying mode, the time that ad is presented to them.

Karen Inglis: Yeah.

James Blatch: Of course, we did have, quite earlier on the podcast, we had Depeche Mandalia, who talked about marketing, I can't remember the name of the series, now, but-

Karen Inglis: Oh, the story, the one with the name-

James Blatch: Where your name goes into the book. Your child's name.

Karen Inglis: Yeah, What's My Name, or Lost My Name, or something. My Name is Lost, yes.

James Blatch: Yeah, My Name Lost or something.

He had great success with Facebook ads, but really going for parents, godparents, friends of children.

Karen Inglis: Well, he did, but the difference there was it's a personalized product.

James Blatch: Yes, it was a product.

Karen Inglis: It was a personalized product. My recollection is he had a massive back budget as well. They had millions of pounds. Yeah, great product, but I think that is if you can think of a way to personalize, perhaps, it would work, but I had the impression they did have a very big budget, as well.

James Blatch: Yes, I think it was quite big.

Karen Inglis: One of those things is that I think if you do have a huge budget, you can maybe make it self-fulfilling by the more you spend. Then, the sales come.

James Blatch: Karen, final plug for the book. Where can people find it?

Karen Inglis: People can find it by going online, searching how to self-publish and market a children's book. I'm trying to remember the title.

James Blatch: There you go. There's a prompt.

Karen Inglis: How to Sell, yeah.

James Blatch: How to Sell, Publish, and Market a Children's Book. Karen Inglis. I-N-G-L-I-S.

Karen Inglis: Yeah, and it will be available in print, and as an e-book, and I'll make it available everywhere.

James Blatch: All good online retailers.

Karen Inglis: Yes.

James Blatch: Excellent. Karen, thank you so much for coming onto the podcast today. We don't get a lot of time to really focus on children's authors, and it's been good, and for a lot of people who write to us all the time saying, "How do I market children's books," I think this book is going to be very useful.

Karen Inglis: I just remembered one other thing I haven't said, which I don't know if this is going to mark up your wind down thing where you put the music coming on.

James Blatch: Go ahead. Hold the music.

Karen Inglis: Hold the music, yeah. Local book shops. I would say, in terms of again establishing your local brand, do go to your local book shops which have a children's section.

Certainly, I've been in my local Waterstones, as well. Go in and show them your book and offer to go and do a signing, and to provide it on consignment, because I certainly do supply my local book shops. Just thought I'd throw that one in.

James Blatch: Brilliant. Just on that front, you used CreateSpace, back in the day.

What are you using today? Are you still using it?

Karen Inglis: I use CreateSpace for my Amazon. I will probably move over to Kindle Direct publishing for print, as I'm still assessing it.

Then, I use, well, I advise everyone to use Ingram Spark for everything else. I happen to use Lightning Source, because I've been around long enough.

They didn't do this, when I first started out. But those would be the two routes.

Then again, in my book, I give some alternatives for if your book sales take off, and you know that they're selling very well, there are other ways of getting, you might be able to get more cost effective short print runs direct from printers. But again, I go into all that in the book, as well as the whole wholesale distributing to book shops thing.

James Blatch: In fact, I was chatting to somebody yesterday. I think he used Clay-

Karen Inglis: Yeah, exactly.

James Blatch: In the UK, and got a 700 print run I think at about two pounds 50 a book.

Karen Inglis: Clay's is one of the ones I talk about, because they also have a thing where they will, 'cause they got some arrangement with Gardner's that makes it look as though your book is in stock, or something. I have it, I've got that sort of all documented.

James Blatch: Okay. When the physical book's important, this is an area, again, we don't do a lot of discussion about.

The paperback, e-book, and the print on demand is all you need.

But for children's books, in the States as well, we've mentioned a couple of UK printers, but it is definitely worth checking out those people who can do a fairly reasonable print run for you. Then, you've got physical product to take to the schools, and the other cult bookshops.

Karen Inglis: I should add, at the moment, for my school stock, I use Lightning Source / Ingram Spark. You can order those, and that's fine for

your stock. But I've got a feeling that when you're getting, if you start getting into ordering over 100, 100, 200, and you're using Ingram Spark, you might be able to find a better deal somewhere else, but all of that will be, the detail of that will be in the book anyway.

James Blatch: We can start the music again.

Karen Inglis: Now, you can start the music.

James Blatch: Thank you very much. It's been quite noisy here at the London Book Club, but I hope you can hear us clearly.

Karen, again, thank you very much. Then, you'll come along for a drink tonight? SPF drinks?

Karen Inglis: Oh, absolutely. Absolutely, and a pin, please.

James Blatch: Excellent, and a pin? Mark's Dawson's got the pins.

Karen Inglis: Oh, has he?

James Blatch: Yes. He'll bring them along.

Karen Inglis: I have, here's my virtual mug. I do have a mug.

James Blatch: As soon as you see Mark arrive tonight, go up to him and ask him for a pin, okay? Because he might run out.

Karen Inglis: Okay. All right.

James Blatch: That's it. Thank you, Karen.

Karen Inglis: All right. Thank you.

James Blatch: I asked you, I think when we were doing some of the webinars, when the ads for authors courses opened, I asked you what course was most important, people should go to first.

Instead of you saying Facebook Ads for Authors, because it's the main course that we deliver, it covers mainly just everything else, you hesitated, and said, "Maybe AMS Ads."

It's interesting to me that that AMS ads has gone from, in the time we've done this podcast, from zero to an incredibly important platform.

Mark Dawson: Yeah, it's 50-50 I'd say, at the moment. I think they're both important, and they can achieve, they give you different ways to reach readers, and you get fantastic targeting with Facebook, incredible targeting with Facebook.

But then on Amazon, you're able to market to people who are able to buy there and then, so there are pros and cons for both.

At the moment, I'd say Amazon is the one I'm most interested in, and I'm fairly well plugged in now with the AMS team in London, so I've had a couple of meetings with them. They are, we're talking quite a lot about some changes that might be coming reasonably soon to the platform, making it a little easier for people to use it around the world.

Soon, then, we'll network. It is definitely an interesting area that I think there's lots and lots of potential for growth in the next six months to a year.

James Blatch: Karen has given me a landing page. Let me just check this out, for her book.

She has written a book called How to Self Publish and Market a Children's Book, as we talked about in the interview. You can go to her landing page,

which is this - selfpublishingadventures.com/bookrelease. It's [selfpublishingadventures.com/book release](https://selfpublishingadventures.com/bookrelease).

If the book's not out by the time that this podcast goes out, you can go onto a wait list, and certainly sign up for information about that.

Karen's making really good progress in that, and it's great that she's following your lead, Mark, I think in sharing what she's done, specifically, for children's authors, which is very useful, indeed. Who knows?

We may even make a approach to Karen, one day, and start incorporating some of that stuff into the SPF official paid content, because it's an area that could do with some specialist coverage, I think.

Mark Dawson: Yeah, we'll see. Maybe. Good idea.

James Blatch: Okay. Good. All right. That's it. Well, we can't talk about too much, because we're in the past, and this is going out in the future, and we don't know the future, do we?

Mark Dawson: Well, I do.

James Blatch: Oh yeah, you've kept a lot of secrets.

Mark Dawson: Yeah, I have ways and means.

James Blatch: This is going out on the 20th of July. How many more attacks have their been in Solsbury, since we recorded this?

Mark Dawson: 16. Solsbury's been burned to the ground.

James Blatch: If that turns out to be true, it's going to be a very spooky episode.

Look, thank you very much indeed for joining us. You've got a last chance, I think, for probably the next week to 10 days. We're going to choose our next book club victim, so if you want to be in the hat for that, go to Patreon dot com forward slash SPF Podcast.

Become a gold level supporter of the podcast. We really appreciate it when people support the podcast. Thank you very much indeed for your consideration on that.

Mark and I will be back, I think probably, if everything goes to plan. We'll be back with our Live from New York episode next week. I hope you can join us for that. Thank you very much. Good bye.

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