



Charity Number 1169618

ILF 2021 Newsletter 2

Welcome to edition 2 of ILF's occasional Newsletter. In case you were wondering, our June 2021 festival is cancelled thanks to Covid 19 and its knock on effects. The good news is that it's being replaced by a shorter but still busy Festival running from **Wed Nov 10 to Sat Nov 13**. By then we trust the vaccines will have fully worked their magic, with no major blips, making lockdowns a thing of the past and revitalising everyone's confidence in going out and about again. You might still have to wear masks at the Festival and be socially distanced but don't let that stop you buying tickets when the booking period opens and dipping into the smorgasbord of goodies on offer.....Just remember to wash your hands afterwards!

What's on at Ilminster Literary Festival?

Appetizer - Sunday October 31st

Brooms, pumpkins and pointy hats at the ready, the date being Halloween and bring an optional picnic lunch to the afternoon's annual Literary Quiz at Donyatt Village Hall. Alternatively, just bring family and friends.

Starter - Wednesday November 10th

**An evening presentation at The Arts Centre by professional opera singer Tim Mirfin :
An Opera Singer's Life, including a short song recital.
This event is primarily a thank you for the Friends of Ilminster Literary Festival and will be preceded by a drinks reception. Some tickets for the talk and recital will be available for general public sale, space permitting.**

**To become an ILF Friend please request an information sheet by e mailing
ilminsterlitfest@gmail.com**

Main Course (possibly subject to slight changes before November) -

Thursday 11th, Friday 12th, Saturday 13th November

Presentations by Alan Johnson, Stephen Moss, Barry Venning, Abigail Ballinger, John Crockford Hawley, Andrew Lownie, Tessa Boase, Helen Fry, Brian Freeland, Tim Moorey.

Tickets for all events on sale in autumn, look out then for the full Programme Booklet

Ilminster Literary Festival, November 10 to November 13 2021

Introducing author Graham Hurley



Formerly a TV director and documentary film maker, Graham now lives in Devon and is a full time crime fiction writer, best known for creating the character of DI Joe Faraday, following several stand alone novels. Graham will appear at ILF 2022, so by way of introduction and in his own words.....

Think post - war Britain. Imagine a household without television. Invent a dad mad about classical music. Picture that intimate circle of armchairs drawn up around the steam radio. And then listen to the naked feet of yours truly retreating upstairs for an early night. Always with an armful of books. And a torch.

I've always been fascinated by story, by stuff happening. As a kid the word I used was adventure. A lot of it came from the war. In the early Fifties people had given themselves time to sort their memories out and pass on what had happened to them - either on active service (like my Dad) or (in my Mum's case) under the bombs in London. Some of this stuff was anecdotal, other narratives found their way into movies or books (both fiction and non fiction). I lapped it all up. The magic of story.

Once I was published I slipped into the box marked 'International Thriller Writer'. That was a huge adventure and sustained seven books. Then I wrote a couple of first - person thrillers seen through the eyes of two separate women. Big contrast but - in their own way - enormously challenging. Finally came an invitation from Orion to plunge into crime fiction with a series based in Portsmouth, where we lived. I'm not a great fan of crime fiction and, to be frank, I had a lot of initial reservations but this particular genre box turned out to be far less claustrophobic than I'd imagined.

Portsmouth is a gift to any working novelist, the UK writ small, and early on it occurred to me that here was an early example of a society in the process of disintegration. Cops are frequently first - person witnesses at this carnival of self destruction and as the series developed I managed to create a powerful undertow of social (and thus political) unease. There was also a technical challenge that I had to face as a writer because I'd always worked within the framework of one off stories. Series writing can be tricky but - like a good dinner party - the trick lies in the guest list. These people have to combust over a significant number of books. And, dare I say it, they do.

To date I've published 42 books, two of them non fiction. Have I had any rejections? Loads. And they still happen (chiefly in the field of film and TV). How do I deal with them? By muttering a quiet prayer for the name at the bottom of the rejection e-mail and moving swiftly on!



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Not all authors find it easy to get their work published.....by Ken Cooper

- ✚ **Robert M. Pirsig's** *Zen & the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance* is in the Guinness Book Of Records for 121 rejections - more than any other best-seller.
- ✚ **The Christopher Little Literary Agency** received 12 publishing rejections in a row for their new client, until the young daughter of a Bloomsbury editor demanded to read the rest of the book. He agreed to publish but still advised the writer to get a day job. Yet *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* by **J.K. Rowling** spawned a series where the last four novels consecutively set records as the fastest-selling books in history, on both sides of the Atlantic, with combined sales of 450 million.
- ✚ After 25 literary agents rejected her debut manuscript, **Audrey Niffenegger** mailed it unsolicited to a small publisher in San Francisco. Translated into over 33 languages and adapted into a movie, **The Time Traveler's Wife** sold 7 million copies.
- ✚ *The Tale of Peter Rabbit* by **Beatrix Potter** was rejected so many times she decided to self-publish 250 copies. It has now sold 45 million.
- ✚ **Margaret Mitchell** had 38 rejections from publishers before finding one to publish her novel *Gone With The Wind*. It sold 30 million copies.
- ✚ After 21 rejections, Richard Hornberger switched to the pseudonym, **Richard Hooker**, and his debut novel became a huge publishing success, spawning an **Oscar-Winning Film Adaptation**, and one of the most watched TV shows in history: *M*A*S*H*.
- ✚ 30 publishers told **Laurence Peter** that his book *The Peter Principle* will never sell. In 1969, a mere 18 months later, it became a number-one best-seller.
- ✚ It was rejected 60 times but letter number 61 was the one that finally did the trick for the worldwide best-seller, later a film, *The Help* by **Kathryn Stockett**.



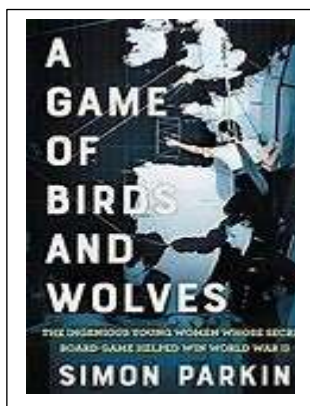
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A Game of Birds and Wolves.....by Ian Munro

In October 2019 I attended a literary festival in Winchester organised by the BBC History Magazine and particularly enjoyed a presentation by Simon Parkin on his book A GAME OF BIRDS AND WOLVES, subsequently buying a signed copy.

The little-known story focuses on the Battle of the Atlantic in WW2 telling how a retired naval commander and a group of young WRENS were tasked by the Admiralty to, in Churchill's words, "Find out how the U-Boats are penetrating our convoys and sinking our ships then come up with the answer". Churchill is said to have feared the Battle of the Atlantic more than anything else during the war. In 1935 the naval commander, Gilbert Roberts took up a commission as a lead instructor at the Plymouth Wargaming School but was forced to retire 3 years later after contracting TB. He and his team of enthusiastic young Wrens then worked on the U- Boat problem and devised a number of successful counter manoeuvres which very quickly reduced the sinking of valuable convoy ships and significantly increased our sinking of U-Boats.

Fascinated by this story I researched further and made a presentation on it to my U3A history group. Gilbert Roberts was originally from the west country and retired to near Yelverton on the edge of Dartmoor. In 1965 he was told that he would receive a knighthood for his war work, only for it to be rescinded a few days afterwards. In January 2020, immediately after publication, Steven Spielberg bought the film rights to the book.



Published by Hodder and Stoughton Jan. 2020.
ISBN 9781529353211

"Brings to life one of the most elusive aspects of the war.....compelling" (NY Times Book Review)

"A Triumph" (The Times)

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