



Galahad Porter

Best of The Blog

Issue 2

Apr 9, 2016

Welcome to Galahad Porter Best of The Blog 2!

As it's the London Book Fair next week, and I'll be attending on April 13, I thought I would give an update on what's happening.

If you follow me on Facebook, Twitter or at galahadporter.com you are pretty well up to date. For those who live by email alone, I have created this PDF file to bring you some edited highlights of the website section 'The Blog'. I plan to publish this every 3 months or so, fitting in with publication milestones.

The Society of Authors

I am pleased to announce that I have been accepted as a member of The Society of Authors, see their website www.societyofauthors.org for details.

London Office

The Galahad Porter office service has been established in Soho, London, UK. Note that I do not write at this address, the office is for trade and marketing purposes only. Details are given at the end of the newsletter.

Update on progress with writing

The short novel, provisionally titled *At Reception*, is in its third re-write! Based on deleted scenes from the thriller trilogy, it is written in first person and set in a hotel lobby. There is one more rewrite to go then I should be close to having it ready.

The original idea was to put out a short novel to just 'get a reputation'. However the first draft looked a little dull. Like a Christmas tree with no decorations. It had structure but no personality. I decided the main character needed more depth. The result was our tree got lights, but they glowed dimly, and seemed disconnected! The storylines needed weaving together so the tree is currently

getting strands of tinsel. I still feel it needs a few baubles to really bring it to life! Hence the need for another rewrite. The manuscript should be ready by the end of May.

The trilogy continues to progress, albeit slowly. Some substantial new ideas will mean that once the short novel is finished there will be no shortage of material to work on!



A 'miner' interruption to attend the London Book Fair!

Which publication route?

A visit to a bookstore will confirm that very few short novels (novellas) get on the main fiction shelves, and those you find are usually by established authors. I had planned to forget going the agent/major publisher route as that would be unlikely to be successful, and delay publication even further.

However, two things have conspired to encourage me to at least give it a go.

Firstly, as a consequence of repeated rewriting, it is getting longer. Secondly, timing.

There are two book launch periods for a new writer to avoid. The first is the spring sell in to bookstores for the summer holiday reading

season. I'd be competing with bestseller authors and have no chance. The other is the autumn sell in to bookstores for the winter holiday period, where biographies of celebrities and cookbooks abound.

If I want the short novel in bookstores I need to give about 6 month notice. The book industry works that way. If I don't want my little Christmas tree left in a corner lost amongst the big shiny celebrity trees I should wait until early 2017 to launch. This buys me a couple of months to test out a few smaller publishers and selected agents.

The style of the short novel is not representative of the main trilogy, although the central characters do overlap. If an agent/publisher loves the book and it does well they will want something else in the same style.

All in all, working with a serious full service self-publisher is probably the best route. I can then get on with finishing the trilogy, and go the traditional agent route with that.

The London Book Fair should make clear the best road to take.

You Waster (first published 10/3/16)

Get told you are wasting your life away?

One lesson I have learned in life is that nothing you do is ever a waste of time! At least not if you become a creative writer!

I read somewhere the best writers are older as they have more 'life experience' to draw on. Well, it's not just age, it's what you have done in that time. Spending your working life in the same job is not the same as backpacking and partying all over the world in your youth. You can still be young and have a lot more 'life experience' than someone else.

I gave up full time work well before retirement loomed. My ex-colleagues probably thought 'what a waste!'

Not at all, I have accumulated a rich seam of experience to mine. Well, except those times that were so colourful I never managed to recall the next day! Of course it is possible to write a good yarn synthetically. A little research, imagination and visualization of scenes are a basis. But truly original ideas need a good dash of experience to make them come alive.

Don't let anyone call you Waster - you never know when you might need your Waste of Time!



Live a colourful life!

The photo shows rainbow lorikeets in my garden. They watch me write and chatter between themselves... wonder what they say.... 'waster, waster waster' ?

How I write is changing (first published 13/2/16)

As the short novel and trilogy progress the way I write is changing. I used to sit at the screen and type anything that came into my head, watching the word count rapidly grow. Now, as the words become a novel, the pieces need assembling, editing and turning into something approaching the final format. Ideas have to become actions and conversations, locations need describing etc. The word count growth seems to crawl along, 1000 words adds 1% now, not the 10% or so of early days. It feels like one step backwards for two steps forward - deleting a paragraph then replacing it with two paragraphs closer to, but still likely to be a long way from, the final version!

Most of my writing is now done between 11am-2pm, usually turning ideas from previous days, and sometimes months, into actual text for the novel. Outside of this period, ideas come to me and get noted for future use.

When I started writing ideas would open new storylines and the words flowed. Now any change has to be integrated into the existing framework. I expect this to become a real pain. For an

organised person having to reorganise whole storylines is very annoying, but necessary to keep improving!

You may think writing seems like a jigsaw, putting the various plot pieces together. But it's MUCH more difficult! The pieces have to be assembled in space and time. Each piece is flexible, it can be bent, twisted, shrunk and stretched - it is not always easy to tell what goes where! You sometimes feel lazy, the challenge is too much to take on, and want to leave some pieces out - but who wants a book full of holes?!

To work on the jigsaw I find I need to keep printing sections out, and then occasionally the whole thing. It is then laid out in front of me: initially it fit on the dining table, and now it's on the floor, and eventually will be any surface I can find! I need this to help both see and FEEL the balance between sections, and look for obvious bits that have not been rewritten. You cannot do this on a screen, not even over two monitors. Recently I discovered I had not written any conversation for a character, although he was busy doing things! The use of ink, paper, shredder and the recycling bin is rising!

The one thing I am not yet sure about is how much of the book I will be able to remember! I don't want to have to keep re-reading the whole thing to find the odd paragraph that needs linking into something else! I am sure I'll be revisiting this subject again during the later stages of rewriting!

In your head - First Person writing (first published 7/2/16)

I chose the first person style of writing for the short novel. Everything is from the perspective of the main character who is a woman. It is less popular than the more common third person writing, but produces great dramatic effect. You are there, living inside her head, with all her thoughts and emotions.

There are many challenges approaching a story with this technique. In a sense everyone who has ever written in this style is writing about the same person, a human. Humans have many things in common, although each has a unique combination of personality and physical traits. The interaction of the character with differing situations makes such stories interesting.

Obviously, it is impossible not to have some elements of your character similar to those in other works. Many conversations are pretty well standard eg 'Good morning, how can I help?' and specific actions and emotions/humour are typically human eg checking ones hair in a mirror and thinking about it.

The challenge is avoiding basing a character on yourself. It's sometimes hard to detach your own opinions from those of the character. It is necessary to get into the head of the character, and try bring out a compelling story from what can be largely mundane actions and situations.

How far you go with psychology is a difficult call, the character needs depth without over doing it.

I hope the reader will identify with her thoughts and feelings, and see her as a friend who is struggling to cope.

Promotional materials





An online shop is planned to open to coincide with the launch of the short novel.

Final word.....

I have never needed to go to the London Book Fair before, so will blog my experience as a novice after the event! See www.londonbookfair.co.uk for details.

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