



The story I had to tell

Peter Herman spent years in a job he calls 'boring' but the fascinating stories he heard along the way have led him to write a rollicking yarn of murder and international intrigue.

Peter ran his own pharmacy in Marylebone and in the process met a lot of famous people, including politicians and globetrotting business people who fuelled the plot for his novel *Operation Ivy, A Marylebone Tale*.

His story begins 70 years ago as the Allies are pushing Hitler's forces into retreat across Europe, then moves into the 1970s and 1980s to trace the adventures of three main characters and their parts in the international trades in oil, gold and blood.

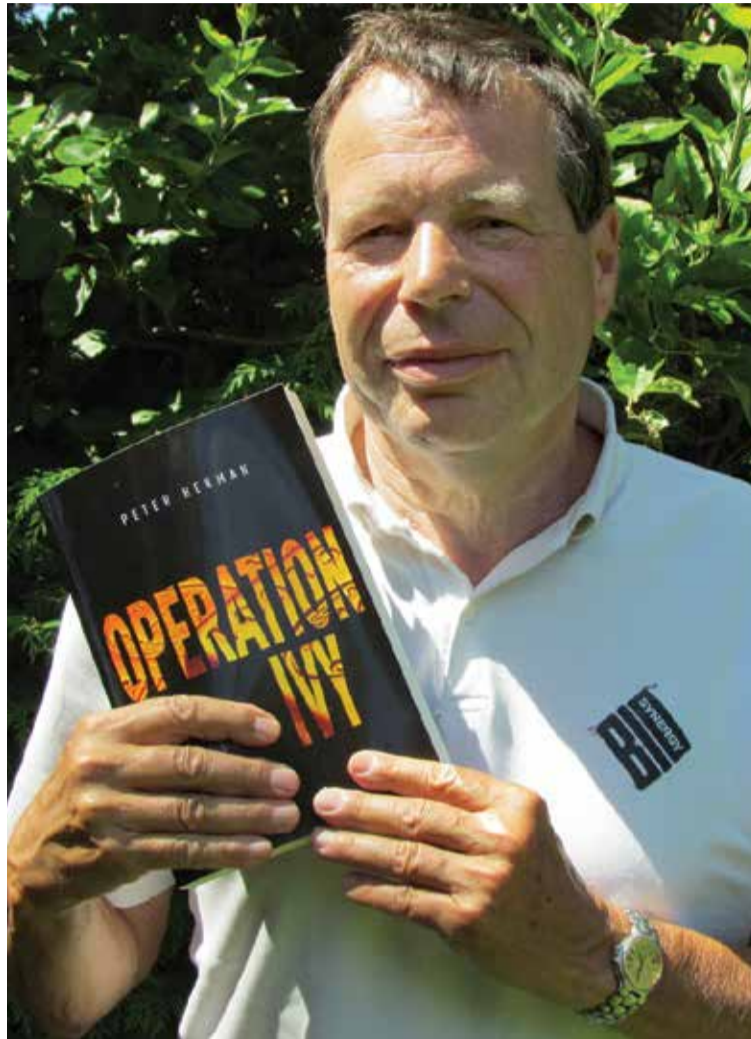
A long process

"I met a lot of people in Marylebone and they told me a lot of stories," says Peter, who lives in Brim Hill. "Ninety per cent of what is in the book is true and it's a very moral book. Only the names have been changed to protect the guilty."

Peter, now semi-retired, is not a professional writer and admits the process of getting *Operation Ivy* down on paper was not an easy one: "I had lots of stories buzzing around in my head and knew what I wanted to say but I don't type and my longhand is atrocious. In the end I did it a page at a time and a friend typed it up as I went."

Competition

As a new writer it's hard to get publishers and book shops to take you seriously. Peter is



Peter Herman with his first novel 'Operation Ivy'.

trying to get around this by publicising his novel with his own competition. He's set up a website where readers can answer three questions about the plot and be in with a chance

of winning £50,000.

Operation Ivy, A Marylebone Tale is available from Joseph's Bookstore in Temple Fortune, from Daunts Bookshop in Marylebone High Street and from Amazon and Kindle. For more details on Peter's competition, go to www.bes-tauthor.co.uk

Woman at the heart of the fight for wildlife

By Sheila Armstrong

Film star turned wildlife campaigner Virginia McKenna came to Stephens House, East End Road, in July, captivating a packed audience as she talked about her career as an actress, the film that changed her life, and her organisations Zoo Check and Born Free.

Effect of elephant's death

Miss McKenna started as an actress in the 1950s; her work includes the memorable film *Carve Her Name With Pride*. In 1964 she went to Kenya with her husband Bill Travers to make the classic wildlife film *Born Free* about George and Joy Adamson and their work with lions. She described George as a person with a deep understanding of lions and all animals, a natural teacher whose heart was in the bush.

Working on the film gave her a new direction. The Born Free organisation was set up in 1984, its catalyst being the death of a young elephant they had filmed with.

Working for wildlife

Born Free now works worldwide to save the lives of animals, stop suffering, protect species and rescue vulnerable and often captive beasts. Their aim is to keep wildlife in the wild, which is increasingly difficult as wild places in the world are diminishing. Their latest initiative, called The Global Friends Project, works closely with children and schools.

In her wide-ranging talk



Talk: Virginia McKenna.

Photo copyright Andy Gott

Miss McKenna spoke passionately about the plight of endangered species, the cheetah pet trade in Ethiopia, the captive animal industry, the trade in ivory and rhino horn, and Born Free's work to eliminate the use of wild animals in circuses in the UK.

Held as a fundraiser for the North London Hospice, this fascinating afternoon ended with an informal tea party and a book signing. Find out more about Born Free at www.bornfree.org

KALASHNIKOV KULTUR

By Ricky Savage, the voice of social irresponsibility

Light up for a long hot summer

Ah, summer, the beating heat of the sun, the taste of an ice cold beer and the smell of burning flesh that tells you that the flat boy at number 23 is sunbathing. What joys, what delights as the road melts, dogs pant listlessly and lose all interest in walkies while cats avoid tin roofs. What could be better?

Well, lots of things, mostly involving silver sand on foreign beaches, half naked members of the opposite sex, rum punch and industrial quantities of recreational narcotics. But this is London and all we've got is homo stupido deciding it's time to light the barbecue.

Australians know how to do barbies. They have the climate and inclination to chuck raw prawns and wallaby steaks onto smouldering charcoal while basting themselves in ice cold lager. The Brits? They might think they know what they are doing, but then so did England last winter before the Aussies trashed them at cricket.

The British barbecue is proof that most men should not be let anywhere near sharp knives, petrol, matches or meat. It is a form of madness that starts the moment some grinning oaf says the sun might shine and Tesco's announces a special offer on wombat burgers. It continues with the 'man' of the house putting on his cooking shorts, opening a beer and trying to work out how to light a fire without rubbing two boy scouts together. This all takes time, often from midday until long after the rest of the family have phoned for a takeaway pizza.

Once the barbie is burning, homo stupido starts chucking meat on it. This can be anything from bargain burgers to the kind of steaks that ended their connection with life when the pony club had a bring and buy sale. The more adventurous will probably chuck on the odd chicken wing and open yet another beer. And, this being Britain, it will probably have started raining.

In the end, as homo stupido slumps on the ground and the rest of the family fill a couple of bin bags with his culinary efforts before ordering another takeaway, no one is happy. Except, that is, for the local cat population who've been looking forward to feasting on undercooked chicken and burnt horsemeat ever since he lit the first match.

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