

David Jones: One Man's Journey

By Lena Strang



The owner of the restaurant 'The Mirage' in Praia da Luz, serves up not only tasty Portuguese cuisine, but also big portions of fantasy. David Jones has just had his novel, 'Trevelyan' published; a fast-moving, entertaining novel with a difference. Part of the novel is set in Praia da Luz and if readers look carefully, they may well recognise a character or two!

Through his meticulous research, David has created a multi dimensional character who romps through life, encountering beautiful women, wicked villains, and high level espionage; even managing to commit the perfect crime!

Recruited into MI6, Nick Trevelyan, in true James Bond fashion, takes us through breath-taking escapades.

David is no stranger to fiction. He is the creator of the hugely popular, animated

character, 'Fireman Sam', which has had eight television series and over 27 million copies sold in 60 languages in over 100 countries. I asked David how it came about. "At the time I was working as a fireman in London but also had a business making bronze figurines," David explains, "I created a statuette of Fireman Sam for fund raising purposes. But as things came together, it eventually developed into a children's series."

Having all this under his belt, what was it that brought David to the Algarve, I wonder? When he tells me about his own life and the manner in which he made a new life for himself here, I'm taken aback. Life truly can be stranger than fiction.

David grew up in London during the war and having left school with no qualifications, found himself in a variety of situations which included working in the fire brigade,

a stint in Australia on the £10 assisted passage, being a member of the Household Cavalry, serving in Malaya and later being part of the Mounted Ceremonial Squadron in Knightsbridge.

"When I had just come out of the Household Cavalry, I got a phone call asking if I wanted to become driver and bodyguard for an American multimillionaire," David muses, 'and being penniless at the time, I obviously said yes."

David travelled through Europe in the employment of the multimillionaire who eventually decided to settle in Praia da Luz for a while. And this is how David's love affair with the Algarve began. Having encountered his future Portuguese wife here, a few years later he settled in Praia da Luz with his young family and built up his restaurant business.

Even though he ended up bringing up his four children on his own after his divorce and running 'The Mirage', David still has had time to put pen to paper.

The seeds for 'Trevelyan' were sown many years ago when an old colleague from the Guards visited him in the Algarve. "My friend having worked in the London Safety Deposit Vaults, gave me an idea for a superb plot," David explains, "I let my ideas mature and then return to them and continue writing. I suppose this story has been more than 15 years in the making."

What is in the pipeline then, at the moment? He tells me he is working on two animation projects that have caught the attention of producers in America.

He feels passionate about what is happening to the world in terms of our dependence on scarce resources. The book he is working on currently depicts



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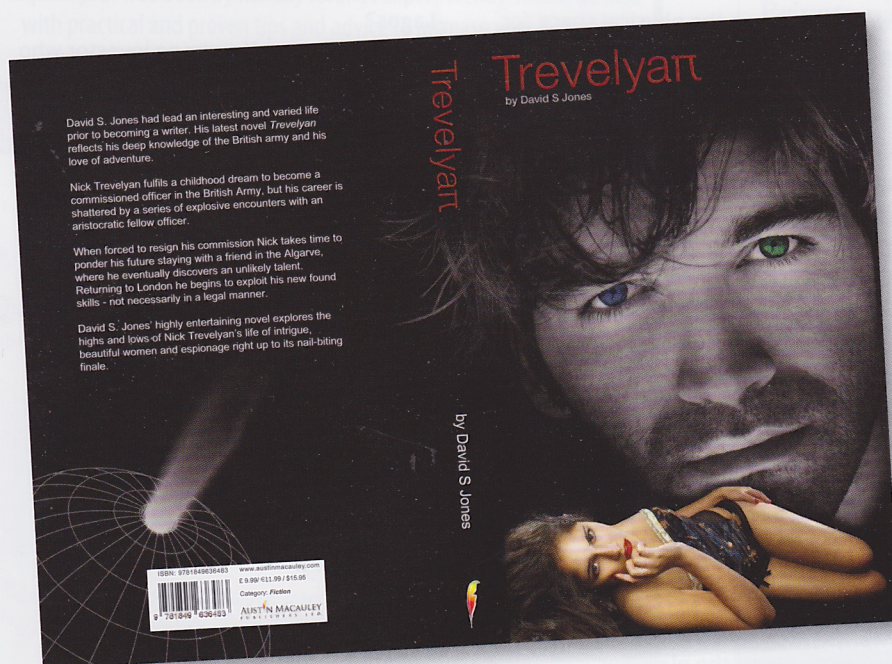
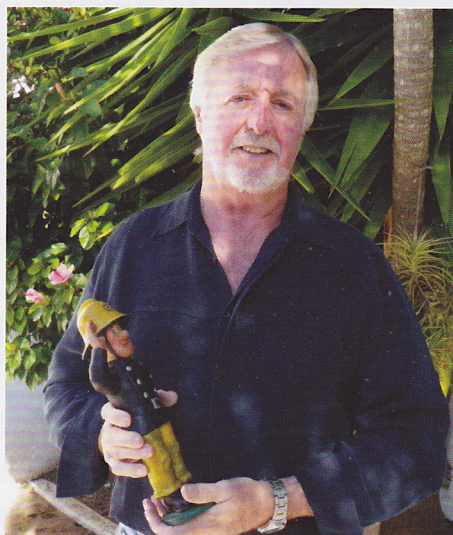
the scenario facing society when oil is contaminated and inevitable chaos follows. This promises to be an interesting cautionary tale and is an example of the eclectic writing he is pursuing.

In the very colourful life he has been leading, is the success of 'Fireman Sam' the highlight? David is hesitant at first. "Fireman Sam wasn't exactly a red letter day; it was more of a process, but I suppose being nominated for the Baftas was special." He goes on to explain that with hindsight, being a fireman was a highlight, as going to work everyday was an adventure in itself.

"Compared to some of my deskbound friends, I think I drew the long straw," he laughs.

And regrets? "I have always had a chip on my shoulder, having left school at 15 with no qualifications," he says, "but now I think I have eroded that chip and have proven, at least to myself, that I can achieve."

The publication of 'Trevelyan' has shown that the owner of 'The Mirage' has it in him to turn long held ambitions into reality. I am sure this is not the last we have heard of David Jones; there are bound to be more treats in store for the reading public. Here's to the adventures to come!



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