



Pages of the Past

CELEBRATING
HISTORICAL FICTION

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From the Editor

Hello and Happy Friday to you all!

This week we don't have an imagined author interview with a long dead author like we did last week. Although several of you commented that you enjoyed the imagined chat with a favorite writer from the past. Don't tell, but he may join us one more time at Christmas to talk more about his bestselling book, *A Christmas Carol*.

This week we bring you an author interview with a real living and breathing author, Ruth Kozak. Her writing required intensive research in Greece to bring us the tales from so long ago. My historical fiction writing goes back to the 1930s, occasionally as far back as the 1850s. Ruth's stories go back to the days of Alexander. I think you'll enjoy seeing what she has to share about her writing journey.

Stay tuned for future issues –In the weeks ahead we have author interviews scheduled with Tiffani Angus, Edith Maxwell, Beverly Swayze, Heather Osborne, Rachel Bodner, and a lot more!

Trisha

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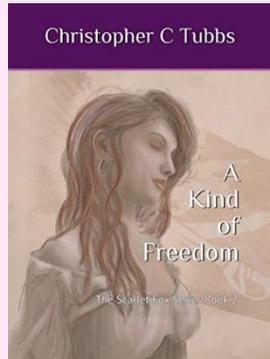
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New Releases

A Kind of Freedom

Christopher Tubbs



Scarlett returns to the Caribbean in the Fox at the end of the hurricane season in 1663. Her aim; to establish a permanent base and to continue raiding the Spanish Main. What she doesn't anticipate is getting her revenge on the inquisition, falling in love and a change in outlook.

Following on from the first Scarlet Fox book this story takes you on a journey through seventeenth century South America and the Caribbean. Ravaging settlements, raiding ships, going to war with the Dutch, and awakening to the reality of slavery, both black and white. This story is a rollercoaster of action, adventure, cruelty, self-realization and fulfillment.

Mr. Keynes' Revolution

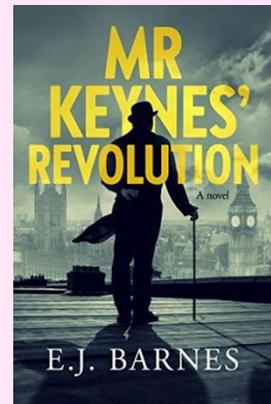
E.J. Barnes

When the brilliant Maynard Keynes walks out on the Paris Peace Conference in 1919, he seems destined to obscurity. But in the crisis-ridden 1920s, he soon finds himself back on the public stage. A man of fierce intelligence but hidden susceptibilities, he is not afraid to speak the truth or hold the powerful to account, in a world on the brink of collapse.

Ballerina Lydia Lopokova has fled the Russian Revolution and is now seeking her own personal salvation. The last thing she expects is to join her fate to that of a Bohemian economist.

Set in a world where personal and political certainties are crumbling, and where the very future of capitalism is in question, this is a novel about money and power, as well as an unusual love story.

Based on the true story of John Maynard Keynes, ground-breaking economist, controversial intellectual, government adviser, financial speculator and Bloomsbury Group member, and one of the most significant figures of the twentieth century. There have been many biographies of the founder of Keynesian Economics, but this is the first time historical fiction has put his life at centre stage. It combines the battle of the gold standard with the Russian ballet, Bohemians with central bankers, the forbidden gay world of 1920s London with the risks of currency speculation ... Virginia Woolf and Winston Churchill ... economic crisis and political disaster ... and a one-man crusade to save capitalism from disaster.



10 Historical Events that Aren't Fiction

I can't take credit for compiling these ten fascinating historical facts. I was on the search for bits of historical fiction trivia to share with you this week, and I stumbled across this post: [Ten Historical Events that Sound Like Fiction but are Actually Real](#).

Of course, you know I had to run and check out what they had to say. Some of the happenings were fun and unique. I know that as historical fiction authors, we're always on the search for little historical tidbits that we can incorporate into our stories. I thought you might find some of these amusing too. (Well, except for the stinky stench one.)

One of these I'd heard about before, the Christmas truce across enemy lines during World War 1. But even though it wasn't a new piece of information to me, it's always great to read about things like this again. I think my favorite was the tale of the chimp helper in Africa.

Here is a recap of the ten events, but if you want to read more, go check out the original post. There's a lot of great photos there that I wasn't able to share here.



Image credits: [Varges Ariel, Ministry of Information/Imperial war museum via Wikimedia](#)

1. In 1325, the rival cities of Modena and Bologna had a war due to a stolen bucket. The city of Bologna declared a war on Modena, which still has the bucket to this day.
2. The "Great Stink" was an event in central London in 1858. The hot weather exacerbated the smell of untreated human waste and industrial effluent that was present on the banks of the River Thames.
3. In 1859, English settler Thomas Austin released only 24 rabbits onto his property in Australia. He underestimated the consequences of his deed, and by the 1920s, the rabbit population reached a staggering 10 billion.
4. One day in 1871, Canada was perfectly visible from Rochester, NY. (50 miles away!) The phenomenon was known as the "Rochester Mirage."

5. During Christmas of 1914, a truce was held between Germany and the UK. They decorated their shelters, sang carols, exchanged gifts across no man's land, and played a game of football (or soccer) between the soldiers.
6. Jack, a baboon, was employed to change rail signals. He was paid twenty cents a day and a half a bottle of beer each week. During his nine years of employment, Jack never made a mistake.
7. The town in Germany was spared when Count Von Tilly declared that if anyone in the town could drink a 3.5-liter tank of wine in one go, he would spare the town and move on. One person successfully did it, prompting the army to leave.
8. On March 13, 1989, the entire province of Quebec, Canada suffered an electrical power blackout caused by a solar storm.
9. King Edward I of England built the largest trebuchet ever made called "the Warwolf." The Scots inside the castle surrendered by the mere sight of it.
10. During the marathon at the 1904 Olympics in St. Louis, the first-place finisher did most of the race in a car. He had intended to drop out and get a car back to the stadium. On the way back, the car broke down and he began walking again. He started jogging when he heard the fanfare.



Jack, a chacma baboon, worked as a railway signal changer in South Africa for 9 years. He was initially employed as a pet assistant to a disabled railway signalman named James Wide. James Wide, a double leg amputee, purchased Jack and trained him to push his wheelchair and operate rail signals under his supervision.

The idea of a baboon manning the signals caused an investigation to be initiated. The authorities, though skeptical, after witnessing his job competency officially employed Jack. The celebrity employee was paid twenty cents a day and a half-bottle of beer every week. Throughout the nine years of his employment, Jack never committed a single mistake.

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Author Spotlight: Ruth Kozak

Today our guest author is Ruth Kozak. When we're talking the historical fiction genre, the periods of time run the gamut from thousands of years ago, to the 1940s or 1950s. Personally, I find that I tend to write mostly in the years from the 1850s to the 1940s. But Ruth takes historical fiction to the other spectrum of time, back to the time of Alexander the Great. Welcome, Ruth!



Ruth, what was it like researching for this particular time in history?

I had been reading and researching about Alexander since I was in my teens. When I was finally able to actually go to the places I was writing about, it was a huge thrill. While I lived in Athens during the '90's I also had contact with a lot of Classical scholars, and people from the Finnish Institute, Norwegian Institute, and British Library were all very helpful providing me with opportunities to research in their libraries, and getting me free passes to all the archaeological sites. I managed to visit all the sites in Greece as well as Turkey. Unfortunately, I missed my chance to visit Syria (my biggest regret) and at that time couldn't go to the Middle East either. But I had a lot of resources to help me and encouragement from the scholars.

I see that you wrote *Shadow of the Lion* while you lived in Greece. Do you think if you hadn't lived there at that time, the book would have evolved and grown in your mind?

When I went to live in Greece, I was actually working on my current WIP, **Dragons in the Sky**, but because of my deep interest in Alexander, I'd always wanted to write just about him. I had read all Mary Renault's wonderful books about him and was intrigued

(and somewhat disappointed) in her last book, **Funeral Games**, which seemed a bit less 'rich' and more 'hurried' than her other books, so I decided I'd like to write about that period- from Alexander's death. When I returned from living in Greece in 1987 I first started writing SHADOW as a young adult story about Alexander's little known only legitimate heir, Alexander IV, but soon realized it was too 'political' a story to be told as a YA. So, in 1993 I decided to start over and expand it. At that time, the Greek consulate in Vancouver who learned of my project, flew me back to Greece so I could do more research. And all during the rest of the '90's I lived part time in Greece while I worked on the MSS.

Can you tell us a little bit about *Shadow of the Lion*?

When Alexander the Great, King of Macedon, and conqueror of Asia, died suddenly in Babylon at the age of 33 under suspicious circumstances everyone who lived under his shadow was affected. The shock of his death brought disorder to his Empire from Macedon to Persia and a deadly power struggle began over who would rule.

The novel is a long one, and the publisher decided to publish it in two volumes. Book 1 **Shadow of the Lion: Blood on the Moon** begins with Alexander's death and the chaos it caused, followed by the birth of his only living heir, Alexander IV (called by his Persian name Iskander) – a child of Alexander's Soghdian wife, Roxana. Because this child was not full-blooded Macedonian the generals named both the child and Alexander's mentally ill half-brother Arridaios as joint kings. This first novel follows their journey from Babylon back to Macedon.

Book two, **Shadow of the Lion: The Fields of Hades** is all about the power struggle between Alexander's Successors, his mother Olympias and his 18 year old niece Adeia-Eurydike who are all trying to vie for control of Alexander's empire. The child is caught in the midst of this power struggle and we see how he copes and how he and his mother try to survive, being considered 'foreigners'. One of the main characters in the book is Alexander's illegitimate half-brother Ptolemy who took charge of building the new city of Alexandria in Egypt and later becomes pharaoh of Egypt. He is a key character throughout the story.

As my British publisher has now gone out of business due to the Brexit crisis etc., I have published **Shadow of the Lion** in its full content on Kindle ebooks. Once the stock of the hard cover books is extinct, I will republish the novel in soft cover on Amazon.com.

You have another book out, *Athens and Beyond*. Right now, with the world's travel so curtailed, I doubt many of us have any travel plans to visit Greece at the moment. But if we ever get there, what is one (or two) sites that you think all visitors should see while there?

Greece is a wonderful country with friendly people. I consider Athens to be my second home and lived there for several years so I have many friends there. I always suggest people should spend at least 4 days in Athens to explore the interesting sites, the New Acropolis Museum and just to enjoy the life in Plaka. I've visited many of the islands, my current favorite is Naxos with its gorgeous beaches, but the Ionians island on the west coast are also interesting, as is Crete, Santorini, Mykonos. Another interesting part of Greece is the Peloponnese with the lovely old port of Nauplion and the very interesting Mani peninsula with its tower houses. Of course, I have spent a lot of time in northern Greece too, while researching, and I love Thessaloniki (the Paris of the north) and all the amazing archaeological sites around there.

What differences did you notice in writing *Shadow of the Lion* compared to *Athens and Beyond*?

Well for one thing, **Shadow of the Lion** is a historical fiction book although I did try and follow the exact timeline of history and the fictional part was mainly my interpretation of the various characters. The events in it are all true. **Athens and Beyond** is a travel guide which I was commissioned to write. I still had to do a lot of research but not nearly as much (and I had visited many of the places in the guide as well as having written travel articles about them). So, for me, the Athens guide was much easier to write and only took about a year or less to put together whereas SHADOW took me almost 15 years with research and writing to publication.

Are there any lessons that the days of Alexander the Great's time can teach us in today's world?

One of the main themes of the story is "How blind ambition and greed brought down a world power." All through history we have seen this happen, first with Alexander's dynasty and then the fall of the Roman Empire and now we are seeing it happen in the U.S.A. I think this in itself is one of the strongest 'lessons' to be learned.

If you could travel back in time and be a part of your story taking place, what part of your story would you pop into?

Because of my interest in Alexander, I eventually went to visit Greece in 1979 (at the time I was writing my first (and current WIP) novel **Dragons in the Sky**. People had always asked me how I knew so much about Alexander and his world when I'd never been there before. I had so many deja vous experiences on that trip, which started in Macedonia, and later during the years that I lived in Greece from '83 – 87, that I really felt as if I had 'lived there' once before in the past. But I wondered, how could a girl like me with a Celtic background ever have been in ancient Greece? That novel, which later I put aside to write **Shadow of the Lion** is like a past life regression story, told in the first person by a young Celtic girl. After **Shadow of the Lion** was accepted for publication, I took the unfinished manuscript of **DRAGONS** out of the mothballs and began to rewrite it. It's almost finished (1 chapter to go) and I'll probably publish it on Amazon as I don't feel I have a long time to wait to find another publisher. This is the synopsis of that story:

DRAGONS IN THE SKY by **W. Ruth Kozak**

The novel is written as if it is a bard's song, with each chapter divided into 'stanzas' like verses of a song. The story explores the connection between the Celts and the Greeks. The omen of the 'dragons in the sky' is one that the ancient seers believed in regarding a meteor falling which could signify the death of a king or some tragic event

OLWEN is a young Celtic girl who is raised by a healer, **Essylt**, and her 'grandfather' **Maelgwyn**, the chief Druid. From an early age she was dedicated to serve the goddess and would go to the Holy Isle when she turned 15. The story is in **OLWEN'S** point of view.

At the time of the Midsummer rites the tribes are in conflict.

SHOLTO, the king's eldest son, had stolen another chieftain's wife, and took the son of a rival tribe as hostage resulting in this hostage being sacrificed when the rival tribe attacks **Caer Gwyn**. **OLWEN** witnesses **SHOLTO** quarrel with his younger brother and kill him.

SHOLTO takes **OLWEN** as a hostage. Because she is a Druid's child and acolyte priestess, nobody can harm her and she becomes **Sholto's** 'luck charm'.

They flee to the coast and take a boat across the **Narrow Sea** to the Celt lands of the **Belgae**.

OLWEN realizes the best way to stay alive is to call on magic powers, the gods, her knowledge of herbs, nature, to survive.

They cross the Alps and eventually reach **Illyrian** land, where **SHOLTO** learns of the Macedonian king who is recruiting soldiers for his army. **OLWEN** knows that if he joins this army he will sell her so she tries to escape. She is rescued by a young hunter who is **ALEXANDROS**, a Macedonian prince. He puts her in the care of a court physician, **THEON** who teaches her more of the healing arts.

OLWEN becomes **Theon's** helper and learns all the skills of a physician, treated wounded soldiers including **Filippos**, king of **Macedon**. She meets and falls in love with **Elidi**, a **Phrygian** seaman who is a helmsman on the king's **trireme**. All the while she thinks of her home in **Caer Gwyn**, and wonders if she will ever see **Essylt** again. Then there is a turn of events that will once again change the course of her life.

This novel is aimed at a **Young Adult** audience but is suitable for all ages. Research for this novel was done in **England** and **Greece** where the author and lived and visited many times.

Thank you for joining us today, Ruth. We appreciate your time. Please leave a few links where our readers can find you and your books, and we'll go follow and friend you.



You can get Ruth Kozak's books here:

[Shadow of the Lion: ebook full set](#)

[Athens and Beyond](#)

You can find Ruth Kozak here:

www.ruthkozak.com

www.inalexandersfootsteps.com

www.shadowofthelion.com

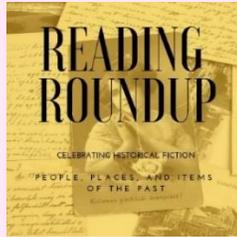
W. Ruth Kozak is a Canadian travel journalist and writer with a strong interest in history and archaeology. A frequent traveler, Ruth lived for several years in Greece and instructs classes in travel journalism and creative writing. A travel writer since 1982 and is a regular contributor to EuropeUpClose www.europupclose.com. She published her own on-line travel zine at www.travelthruhistory.com. Her publications include articles in APA Insight Guides 1994, Writer's Abroad anthology "Foreign Flavours" as well as in three poetry anthologies and she was a writer for The Vancouver Guide for Planet Eye Traveler. Her ATHENS AND BEYOND e-book for Hunter Publishing, US was published in Nov 2015 on Kindle. She is the president of the BC Association of Travel Writers.

Ruth's first historical fiction novel SHADOW OF THE LION: BLOOD ON THE MOON (Volume One) was published July 2014 by www.mediaaria-cdm.com UK. Volume Two, BLOOD ON THE MOON: THE FIELDS OF HADES was published in January 2017. These are her first published literary works. Research was done in Greece and with the help of the Vancouver Greek Consul, the Ministry of Culture, Greece and the Society of Macedonian Studies, Thessaloniki, as well as help from various Classical scholars, and the Finnish Institute and Norwegian Institutes of Athens.

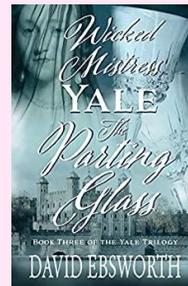
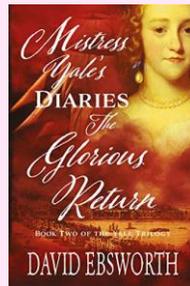
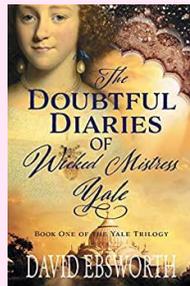
Ruth has written a book poetry 'SONGS FOR ERATO' poems written in Greece soon to be published on Amazon.com. Her current WIP DRAGONS IN THE SKY will also be published on Amazon.com.

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The 1700s & Before



David Ebsworth

[The Doubtful Diaries of Wicked Mistress Yale](#)

1721, and elderly Catherine Yale discovers that second husband Elihu's will has left her no bequest except the slur of branding her a "wicked wife."

True, her private journals are filled with intimacies: her inner thoughts about life in Old Madras, where the East India Company's intrigues are as complex as any in the Mughal Emperor's court; and the espionage she has undertaken, despite the danger into which it has thrust both herself and her children.

Perhaps it's time for her to read them afresh, to go back before the days when Elihu first betrayed her, before she was betrayed by her enemies, and betrayed by the friends who should have stood at her side – before she determined to wreak her revenge on them all.

[Mistress Yale's Diaries, The Glorious Return](#)

1689 and the wife of English East India Company Governor Elihu Yale risks the six-month sea voyage from old Madras to her home in London with her youngest children. But after twenty years away, it's a city Catherine now barely recognises – built anew after the Great Fire and occupied by William the Third's soldiers in the wake of the Glorious Revolution. Yet some things never change, and the secrets she thought she'd left behind in Fort St. George soon return to torment her. An old rival, a long-lost friend and a bitter enemy soon draw her back into a world of espionage, revenge and brutal danger. Her husband may still be on the far side of the world but his reach seems very long indeed.

[Wicked Mistress Yale, The Parting Glass](#)

1700 and East India Company Governor Elihu Yale is back in London, seemingly intent on reconciliation with his wife Catherine after ten years of separation. But those ten years have given her a taste of independence that she's not ready to easily surrender. The ghosts of her previous life continue to haunt her, however – yet another former foe returned with her husband and seemingly still intent on revenge. And an more evil enemy still, in the shape of that Jacobite Colonel John Porter who had caused such damage to her youngest daughter. Drawn back even further into espionage on behalf of her nation, Catherine must battle madness, her desires, the rifts in her family, riot, rebellion and assassination in this tumultuous third and final act of the Yale Trilogy.