



The Alderney Literary Trust

INSPIRING A LOVE OF WORDS

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Leading author begins love affair with Alderney as he launches his novel about Nero

Bestselling author Conn Iggulden discovered Alderney at the weekend, and Alderney discovered a historical fiction novel about much-maligned Roman emperor, Nero.

The author chose the island as the Channel Islands launchpad for his latest novel 'Nero' because he has been unable to attend the Alderney Literary Festival as a speaker due to prior commitments.

He spoke for an hour about the joy of researching and writing fiction for an audience of 50 fans before a sell-out book-signing session organised by the Alderney Literary Trust, sponsored by investment company Ravenscroft.

The former English teacher told how he began writing stories as an 11-year-old when his mother advised him that if he wanted to be a writer he needed to know and understand people. His love of ancient history led him to find out more about the time when a 19-year-old Julius Caesar was captured by pirates, giving him his first big break as an author.

"Everywhere in history there are good stories with the dull bits edited out," he said in answer to questions by fellow historical fiction author, Anthony Riches. "These are stories people have vaguely heard about but they don't know how they turn out."

He also revealed how he spent six months in a shed with his brother Hal writing *The Dangerous Book for Boys*, a how-to book for kids aged eight to eighty featuring all the adventurous things they can make from tree-houses and go-karts to binding a flint to an arrow shaft.

For his *Conqueror* series on Genghis Khan he travelled to Mongolia to explore the vast terrain and meet people whose customs have changed little in 800 years.

As for the emperor Nero, the last of the Augustus-Claudius dynasty, Iggulden researched the facts in Rome and by reading translations of Tacitus, Suetonius and Cassius Dio who were intent on giving Nero a bad press to make subsequent rulers look better.

As with other visiting authors before, Iggulden has fallen in love with Alderney.

“I’ve been given a wonderful tour of this fascinating island and I’m planning to come back with my family as soon as the opportunity arises,” he said.

Alderney Literary Trust founder Isabel Picornell said it had been a privilege to host such a renowned author in Alderney, including a Roman Murder Mystery dinner at the Blonde Hedgehog.

“I’ve been a fan of Conn’s since before he became famous,” she said. “We’ve attempted to lure him to our literary festival but he’s been unable to fit us into his schedule. I have high hopes he will eventually bring his fascinating insights to our faithful festivalgoers in the future.”

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ABOUT CONN IGGULDEN

Conn Iggulden is one of the most successful authors of historical fiction writing today. A former English teacher and a passionate advocate for the power of stories, he has written bestselling series on Julius Caesar, Genghis Khan and the Wars of the Roses, as well as two stand-alone novels: *Dunstan*, set in the red-blooded world of tenth-century England, and *The Falcon of Sparta*, in which he returned to Ancient World themes.

Both instalments of his Athenian series, *The Gates of Athens* and *Protector*, and his recent Golden Age series, *Lion* and *Empire*, are *Sunday Times* bestsellers. He has been described as ‘one of our finest historical novelists’ by the *Daily Express*.

THE ALDERNEY LITERARY TRUST

The Alderney Literary Trust is a charitable trust founded in 2013 to encourage the appreciation of literature and promote critical literacy.

The Trust aims to encourage the enjoyment of reading and writing for pleasure through a variety of literary events such as creative writing courses and guest author appearances. It seeks to inspire readers to develop a deeper awareness of history and its relevance through an annual festival of historical literature.