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**INTRODUCTION**

“You should write a book about it”: does this sound familiar? Maybe you have and, having written it, have hidden the manuscript away in a drawer. Perhaps that precious manuscript has been sent away to a publishing house; for weeks you have waited in hope, but nothing has happened except maybe a rejection slip.

Possibly you managed to get your work accepted by a publisher. After the initial excitement and euphoria, and as the weeks and months passed, perhaps you found their editorial input changed its original character.

Maybe the design and ‘feel’ of the book was not what you had envisaged so, at the end, when you held the first copy of your book, your delight was tinged with a little sadness: it was somehow not quite what you had hoped for. And then the earnings were not what you had anticipated either. While you did not have to pay anything for the book to be published, neither were you overwhelmed by royalty cheques!

If any of this strikes a chord, then perhaps you should consider joining the growing number of authors who choose to publish themselves.

York Publishing Services (YPS) is a small, highly respected company with more than thirty years of experience. Responding to an increasing demand from authors choosing to retain control over their work and supervise all stages of its publication, YPS has extended its business to help authors publish their books. In other words, we can take your manuscript and turn it into a professionally produced book while allowing you control at every stage of the process. And because we are a dedicated in-house company, able to produce small print runs, it will cost you a lot less than you may think.

We have produced this guide to show you how to go about preparing your manuscript for publication, what will happen during the process, what you can realistically expect at the end, and how to work out how much it will cost you. We view this guide as a first introduction to YPS. In addition to our professionalism and expertise we are renowned for our approachability and friendliness (and our modesty!).

However original your work is, however ingenious the plot, compelling the characters or satisfying the conclusion, and whatever the genre you have chosen, your writing will remain a mystery to the rest of the world until you take the next step and turn it into a book.

If, having read this guide, you would like to discuss your manuscript with us, please phone or email us. We look forward to welcoming you into our exciting world of publishing, where we turn yellowing manuscripts into beautiful books!
So, you want to publish a book? You may have written it yourself or it may have been written by someone you know. It may be just for the enjoyment of others or information that you want to record. You may have had your proposal rejected by publishers, or you may just want to have full control over your book, which you would lose if your manuscript went to a publisher. York Publishing Services (YPS) can help.

**WHO ARE YORK PUBLISHING SERVICES?**

YPS is a well-established company with more than 30 years of experience in all aspects of publishing. We provide a comprehensive range of services to our clients and are only too happy to share our knowledge. We also provide practical advice that will avoid the expensive pitfalls and mistakes which anyone new to publishing can easily make.

Let us say right from the start, YPS is not a vanity publisher; we make no extravagant claims about how many copies you will sell. We produce books on high quality publishing papers for many of the mainstream publishers. Our aim is to offer this same high quality, professional look to small or first time publishers. We will give you help, advice and assistance and provide competitive quotations in advance.

If you decide to commission us to transform your manuscript into a book, then effectively you become the publisher (with your own publishing name or imprint). This means you will have complete control over all stages of production, you will own all the books you publish (and the copyright) and the revenue from the sales. No wonder people are choosing to self publish!

If you wish, we can handle full production, from concept right through to the sending out of orders to your customers. Alternatively, you may feel confident that you can cut down your costs by doing some of the production stages yourself.

You do not have to use all our services, just the ones you need. It is up to you.
PUBLISHING SERVICES

EDITING, DESIGN AND PAGE LAYOUT

Our publishing services include copy-editing, proofreading, page and cover design, page by page layout and printing proofs.

PRINTING AND BINDING

We will advise you on the appropriate paper and cover materials, formats and binding styles. We have both digital and traditional print facilities and will advise you which is best for you. It is very important to make your book look the same as those produced by mainstream publishers.

PROMOTION AND MARKETING

Once your book is printed, the work really starts. You need to make sure as many people as possible are aware of your book, and convert that awareness into sales. YPS can help you with the promotion and marketing by giving you advice, suggestions and the tools for you to do it yourself. Included in this booklet are articles by authors who have successfully self-published and promoted their books.

BUYERS’ GUIDE

YPS publishes quarterly buyers’ guides. These provide an opportunity for small publishers to advertise their publications to UK bookshops and library suppliers.

The details of your book, and a thumbnail reproduction of the cover, are displayed.

INTERNET BOOKSHOP

YPS has an Internet bookshop where you could sell your books. Your customers can order your publications from YPS 24 hours a day, 7 days a week and from anywhere in the world. This service is only available to publishers who distribute with YPS.
**Distribution**

When you start to receive orders you will need to issue invoices, pick the order, pack it carefully to protect the books in transit, and finally organise despatch to your customer. When the payments come in they need to be processed and paid into the bank. There is always the problem of chasing for payment from customers who do not pay promptly. The more successful you are, the more you will have to do!

YPS can handle all this for you and forward your sales revenue on a monthly basis. As an established book distributor handling the publications of a wide range of publishers, YPS has a day to day working relationship with Amazon, wholesalers and the book trade in general.

Full details and costs of all our services are in this booklet; however, if you would like additional information please do not hesitate to contact us.

**How Does it Work and How Much Will it Cost?**

We have prepared this guide to help you prepare your publication as efficiently, and therefore as cost effectively, as possible. *The more preparation you do yourself, the lower the costs will be.* If you are unclear on anything you can easily contact us by telephone.

We will provide an initial quotation based on your specification. We have included a quotation form, which requests all the information we need to do this. If you need help deciding your specification, we will be happy to discuss this with you. We will break down the quotation so that you can clearly see the cost of each stage.

Accompanying the quotation will be a statement that will show the profit that you could achieve if you sold all the books you printed. More importantly, it shows how many copies you need to sell to break even. An example form is on page 19.

*We think you will find the costs of self-publishing are less than you might expect.*

If you would like an informal chat about your ideas, please give David Mercer or Duncan Beal a call on 01904 431213.
The Publishing Process: Editing and Design

There are a number of production stages in publishing that you may feel confident doing yourself, in which case the production cost will be lower. We can, however, handle it all for you. Either way, you will always remain in control, as we will consult you at all stages.

The editing and design part of the publishing process covers:

- copy-editing
- page and cover design
- page by page layout
- proofreading
- proofs
- ISBNs and barcodes
- Nielsen BookData.

Copy-editing

Copy-editing is particularly important for non-fiction titles. You are the expert on the content and the facts; however, there could be mistakes in spelling, punctuation and consistency. You may have become too close to your text and can no longer notice the errors that will become all too obvious when the book is printed! We have experienced copy-editors who will check for errors and correct them. We will always consult you about any proposed changes. You can choose not to have your text professionally copy-edited if you are confident it is unnecessary.

Page and Cover Design

The presentation and design of your publication is extremely important. It is the cover that provides the initial visual impact that attracts potential purchasers. We will discuss your ideas with you and then turn your ideas into a cover design. We can include photographs or illustrations.

We will work with you and advise you on the ideal page size, how the book will look and which typefaces to use. We will prepare specimen pages of your book and send them to you for your comment and approval, and we will amend the designs if you are not happy.

Remember, it is your book we are preparing!
**Page by Page Layout**

This is usually called desktop publishing or DTP. Once we have a page design that you are happy with, we will prepare the book page by page to that design. If there are any photographs, illustrations, figures or tables, they will be included in the text at the appropriate place. If we need to prepare figures or scans, there will be a small additional charge.

**Proofreading**

The proofreading stage is the last chance for errors to be picked up and corrected before the work is printed. This is always done after the publication has been prepared page by page.

Proofs need to be read for both sense and accuracy. Reading for sense can involve a straight read-through to make sure the text is understandable, and any dubious facts can be checked as they are more likely to be noticed at this stage.

The proofreader will also check that inserted material such as figures and tables are in the most suitable place and are correctly captioned and set out. Other items to be checked include: chapter and section headings are the same in the text as on the contents page and the page numbers are correct; all references cited in the text are listed in the references; footnotes/endnotes are numbered consecutively and the details match the number shown in the text.

**Proofs**

We will provide you with a set of page proofs and a cover proof to check for any final errors or mistakes. This stage is not a good time to re-write! It is important that the text has been carefully edited before this stage. When you return the proofs we will make the corrections and arrange the printing. If major changes have been made at the proof stage it will be necessary to charge for the additional work involved.
ISBNS AND BARCODES

ISBNs (International Standard Book Numbers) must be obtained by you, as you are the publisher. It is not essential to have an ISBN, but if you intend to sell through bookshops or on the Internet, it is advisable. The British Library, libraries, book wholesalers and bookshops use the ISBN as a unique reference number to record information about the book on their computer systems.

You can contact the ISBN agency at:
http://www.isbn.nielsenbookdata.co.uk/isbn.htm

Barcodes are based on the ISBN. Once you have an ISBN, we can arrange the barcode for you. The cost of a barcode is £20. A bookshop will scan the barcode to access information about the book, such as the price and stock level.

NIELSEN BOOKDATA

Nielsen BookData helps publishers sell books by making sure booksellers have the most accurate, comprehensive and up-to-date information available about your title(s).

It requires the type of information that helps identify, find, order and sell your books. The ISBN, author, title, date of publication and price are essential, but there can be much more. For instance, a description of the content, a short biography of the author, the cover image, the format of the book and a standard subject code to help booksellers searching in a specific subject area can be provided. You can tell them who distributes each of your books, the markets in which they are available, any restrictions on sale, and much more.

Their web address is http://www.bookdata.co.uk

CASE STUDY
Example of Editorial and Design Costs

A detective novel of 70,000 words. YPS prepared the design and layout to a page size of 128 mm wide by 195 mm deep. The final page count was 196.

We handled the cover and text design, page by page layout with proofing and minor corrections.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Page and cover design</td>
<td>£175</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Page by page layout</td>
<td>£140</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barcode</td>
<td>£20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>£335</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Publishing Process: Printing and Binding

If you are handling all the editing and design yourself you will save all the costs involved; however, you will need to supply us with the files ready for printing.

Files for Printing

The file formats we normally work with for the text are:

• print-quality PDF files
• Postscript files
• Microsoft Word files.

We may be able to use other file formats, but you should contact us first with the details. We need the cover to be supplied in the application file in which it has been created. All scans and fonts should be supplied with these files. QuarkXPress, InDesign, PageMaker, Freehand and Illustrator files are the norms. Microsoft Word files are not suitable for covers.

We can use a print-quality PDF (portable document format) file but the cover will have to be correctly set up with the spine size and bleeds, etc. You will need to contact us in advance for this information. More information on files and the creation of PDF and Postscript files can be found in our technical notes.

Bound Proof Copy

Whether we handle the editing and design or whether you supply the file ready for printing, we will digitally print and bind a single copy and send it to you. Although it will be in a plain cover, and may not be printed on the specified paper, it will allow you to see the completed book in all its glory. Although there should not be changes at this stage, corrections can be made before full production if absolutely necessary.
If the changes are extensive and another bound proof is necessary, there will be a charge of £20 for this additional proof.

**PRINTING AND BINDING**

We can advise you on the appropriate paper and cover board, print methods and binding styles for your book. We can always send you samples of the proposed materials.

**HOW MANY COPIES TO PRINT?**

It is always a publisher’s dilemma deciding how many books to print. With conventional offset litho printing, the cost per book is lower the more copies you print, but it is false economy to print more copies than you realistically hope to sell. We will work with you to come up with a realistic print quantity.

**DIGITAL OR OFFSET LITHO PRINTING FOR TEXT AND COVERS?**

These are two different print processes, and we will advise you which is appropriate for your book. Digital printing is appropriate for small-quantity printing, fewer than approximately 200 copies. The inside pages are printed in black and, although the quality is good, the reproduction quality of photographs is not as high as offset litho.

Offset litho is appropriate for print quantities of more than approximately 200 copies and the range of papers and boards is far more extensive.

**COLOUR PRINTING FOR COVERS?**

If your book is to be sold off the bookshelf you will need to make it attractive to prospective purchasers. Usually these books are printed with full-colour covers, although some designs look good printed in two or even a single colour. Covers that are litho printed are normally laminated with either a matt or gloss plastic film. Short-run digitally printed covers can be laminated but the unit cost can be high as there is a minimum cost for laminating. Normally digital covers are printed on a gloss board.
**COLOUR OR BLACK PRINTING TEXT PAGES?**

A large number of colour pages in books with small print runs is expensive. Because colour printing has high fixed costs, the unit cost of the book becomes too high to sell. If required, a number of colour pages can be printed together on a large sheet and these can be bound anywhere within a perfect-bound book (see below). This will keep the cost to a minimum.

If required, black and white photographs can be printed together on a large sheet of different paper, usually silk or gloss. These can be bound anywhere in the book. We are not limited to binding these pages in sections. These pages cost the same to print as the other text pages, although there may be a small additional setting-up cost.

A second colour can also be printed on all or some of the text pages of books printed by offset litho. This will increase the costs, as additional printing plates are needed.

**BINDING STYLES**

We provide a full range of binding styles.

- **Perfect binding:** also called paperback binding.
- **Thread sewing:** the book is bound by machine-sewing folded sections together. This is a stronger binding than perfect binding but only suitable for litho-printed books.
- **Stitch sewn:** the book is bound by gluing together folded sections that have been stitched with wire. It is only suitable for books of 72 pages or more. This is also a stronger binding than perfect binding but a little more expensive.
- **Loose-leaf binding:** pages are shrink-wrapped, drilled and presented in a ringbinder, ideal for reference and training materials. We can organise the production of ringbinders.
- **Wire-o binding:** this is useful for reference books, cookery books, manuals and material for photocopying because the pages lay flat. There are variations of this binding that have a printed spine.
- **Wire stitching:** also called saddle stitching, this is used on journals, magazines, booklets and other short publications, normally up to 76 pages.

**PACKING AND DELIVERY**

Our quotation will include packing into sturdy cartons and delivery to you.
ISBNs and Barcodes

It is not essential to have an ISBN, but if you intend to sell through bookshops or on the Internet, it is advisable.

Please see page 7 for more details on this subject.

CASE STUDY
Example of Printing and Binding Costs

We printed 1000 copies of a novel. The page size (book format) was 128 mm wide by 195 mm deep and it had 196 pages.

The inside pages were printed black, with a full colour cover and gloss finish. We used perfect binding.

Print cost for 1000 copies £2,165, or £2.16 each
**Promotion and Marketing**

Once you have stock of your book, you have the task of promoting and selling it. Other self-publishers are only too happy to pass on their advice, suggestions and experience as well.

**Helpful Advice from Authors who have done it!**

Later in this booklet are articles by self-publishers Fred Normandale and Bob Bibby. They provide helpful practical advice and may help you avoid expensive pitfalls. Although their books are very different, the promotion and marketing principles are the same. YPS also has a range of services that will help you to promote your books and generate sales.

**Buyers’ Guides**

Small independent publishers cannot cost-effectively promote their publications to booksellers and library suppliers nationwide. YPS has developed buyers’ guides as a solution to this problem.

Buyers’ guides are mailed on a regular basis to all UK booksellers and libraries. For as little as £45 publishers, including self-publishers, can feature their titles. Each listing will include the cover, title, author, publisher, short description, ISBN, price and ordering details. Further details are available on request.

*Example of a section from the buyers’ guide*
INTERNET BOOKSHOP

This service is only available to publishers who distribute with YPS.

Customers can go directly to the site or they can be linked from the publisher’s site. Orders can be placed 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, from anywhere in the world.

The cost for being featured on the website is £15 per month, for a minimum of 6 months.

MARKETING PACK

YPs can supply you with a package of materials to help with your promotion. The starter package includes:

- 700 bookmarks, featuring either a book or your publishing company
- 200 postcards, featuring either a book or your publishing company
- 25 A3 posters, for book launches and talks.

The materials are supplied in a storage box and the cost is £175. Further details are available on request.
WAREHOUSING AND DISTRIBUTION SERVICE

YPS provides a comprehensive warehousing and distribution service, which many of our self-publishers find invaluable.

WAREHOUSING

We will store your books in our warehouse. They are still your books, but you will not have to store them in your garage or spare room. Your stock will be covered by our comprehensive insurance policy.

ORDER PROCESSING

Your promotional information will direct orders from both the book trade and individuals to YPS (we can help you with this). Orders from individuals would need to be accompanied by payment; bookshop orders would be supplied on credit. We will process the orders, giving appropriate discount where applicable, and produce invoices and despatch notes.

PICK, PACK AND DESPATCH

The invoices and despatch notes would be passed to our warehouse and the order speedily picked, packed in appropriate packaging and despatched to the customer.

CASH PROCESSING AND CREDIT CONTROL

We will handle all aspects of cash processing and credit control. YPS will pass on to you the full value of the sales every month after allowing 60 days for us to collect payment from customers. In the rare event we are unable to obtain payment the bad debt will be yours.

REPORTS

At the end of each month we will send you a report, either by post or email. This will show you how many books you have sold in the month and how many in the year and the value of the sales in the month and in the year. It will also show you how many copies you have left in stock.

COSTS

The cost of the YPS warehousing and distribution service is £25 per month, for a minimum of 6 months. There is also a variable charge based on £1.20 per book sold to cover postage and packing. We would invoice the fixed charge at the outset and invoice for postage and packaging at the end of each month.
**SOME TECHNICAL STUFF**

**DTP: HOW WE DO IT PROFESSIONALLY**

Books that are professionally produced are normally supplied to us in Microsoft Word, with an original print-out. The print-out should be marked with the hierarchy of headings and any special features (e.g. where photographs should go). The manuscript is then, if required, copy-edited and any queries addressed with the author(s). The Word file is then imported into PageMaker, which is the software we use to create page layout. Other software programs used to style and design pages are QuarkXPress and InDesign.

A template file is produced that includes all the different styles and elements to be incorporated in the book. These styles will include: the line length, margins, position of page numbers, fonts to be used in the main text and in headings, use of any running headers or footers. We can also include a table of contents style and picture positioning. These styles are all included in one template file. This ensures design consistency throughout the book.

The text from the Word file is then flowed (chapter by chapter) into the template and styled page by page. The first proof set is prepared, printed and checked in-house, and then it is sent to the author(s). The author(s) reads it page by page and marks any amendments on these proofs.

If a professional proofreader is required, we can arrange this. He or she will also mark amendments and raise any queries with the author(s). Once the proofreaders changes are agreed, YPS collates the author’s copy and the proofreader’s copy so we work from one set of proofs to make the changes electronically. If a book is all text this is a relatively simple procedure, but if the book is complex with photograph illustrations, tint boxes and tables, etc., this can be very time consuming and consequently more expensive.

We then create a PDF file that is checked by both the author(s) and YPS. Once final approval is given, the file is imposed and sent to print.

**FORMATTING YOUR BOOK YOURSELF**

If you do not have, or are not experienced in the use of, QuarkXPress, PageMaker, etc., you may want to format your book in Microsoft Word or another word-processing package. This is possible and done on a regular basis. There can, however, be a problem when
using these programs. Information, fonts and settings stored on one computer may not be the same as another computer. The information is not passed on in the file and this can cause numerous problems. The problems we regularly see are pages reflowing, fonts, margins and line lengths changing, and embedded photographs and figures not displaying properly. This can be a particular problem when figures are created in other programs, such as Excel, as they are not embedded in the same way as they are in QuarkXPress or PageMaker. The proofs that you receive need to be very carefully checked if the book has been formatted in Microsoft Word (or another word-processing package).

**Supplying Text Files Ready for Printing**

If you are supplying your book to us ready for printing you must format your book exactly as you want it to look, i.e. the book must be carefully edited and all the final corrections made. The page size, the margins, the typeface, etc., must all be set in the correct style. Great attention to consistency should be made throughout the book.

**Standard Book Sizes**

There are a number of standard sizes that you are likely to see on the bookshelf. Book sizes have evolved from the economical use of standard paper sizes. Over the years some of these paper sizes have become unavailable. Not all standard book sizes are economical for every type of paper. You can have your book in the size of your choice, but we will advise you if the size can be changed slightly to make it more economical. Books can be portrait or landscape format.

- **A Format:** 178 mm × 111 mm
- **Penguin:** 181 mm × 111 mm
- **B Format:** 198 mm × 126 mm
- **Royal Octavo:** 234 mm × 156 mm
- **Royal Octavo Wide:** 234 mm × 170 mm
- **A5:** 210 mm × 148 mm
- **American:** 279 mm × 210 mm
- **American Narrow:** 279 mm × 200 mm
- **A4:** 297 mm × 210 mm

Please contact David Mercer, our Print Director, with any queries.
Supplying your Files for Printing

Your files can be supplied to us on floppy disk, CD or Zip disk or by email. The best way to supply files to us for direct printing is as PDF files, or as Postscript files. If you do the latter, we have little additional work to do to the files and therefore there is no additional charge. The files can be printed out as a double-sided proof, perfect bound in a plain cover and trimmed to size, so that you can have a final check through the book in its almost finished state. If you have some minor corrections at this stage we can remove a page from a PDF file and replace it with a corrected version. We will be happy to do this free of charge for up to ten pages, after which we will advise you of the cost before we carry out the extra work.

PDF Files

To make a PDF file from the program you have used to set your book, you should use Adobe Acrobat. This program will produce consistent print-quality PDFs, allow you to make limited editing changes, extract and replace pages, and lots more. There are several programs that will create PDF files that can be downloaded from the Internet. Some of these can be problematic, but one program we have tested with good results is available as a free download from: http://www.pdf995.com

When making PDFs, the fonts must always be embedded and the resolution should be set to print quality. When a PDF file is created, it compresses the file and makes it a lot smaller. It also collects all the information and settings from your computer and locks it into the file, so when we put the file on our computers it should be just the same. This is not always the case if the files are in the original program.

Always open the PDF file and check it page by page to make sure nothing has changed before sending it to us.

Postscript Files

You can supply your finished book to us as a Postscript file; this is a halfway house to a PDF file. We will then take your file and change it into a PDF and send it back to you. You then need to check this PDF on your computer before we output the proofs. To do this, you will need Acrobat Reader, which most computers have already installed.
If you do not have it you can download it free from the Adobe website: http://www.adobe.com/products/acrobat/readstep2.html. Acrobat Reader only allows you to view PDF files.

You can create a Postscript file by going into the windows Start menu and select the Settings option. Click on the Printers icon and select add a new printer.

Choose Local Printer. If you have Windows 95/98 or an Agfa Accuset printer, click on Linotronic 330. For later versions of Windows follow the instructions on the screen and make Linotronic/Accuset the default printer on LPT1. Do not attempt to print a test page. When loaded, right click on the printer icon. Select the General tab, then Printing Preferences, click on Advanced and change the TrueType font option Download as Softfont; also change the Postscript output option to Optimize for Portability.

You will then need to look through the pages in your file to check if any pages have reflowed, as this is possible when the default printer is changed. If there are changes, you will have to make the corrections. Select Print from the File menu on the toolbar, and tick the Print to file box. Click on OK, a new file will now be produced with the extension .prn.

A Postscript file will be a lot larger than the original file, as it now contains a lot more information about the settings on your computer. Postscript files are not compressed. You will probably need to write it to a CD but we can also accept the file on a Zip disk. You will not be able to view the Postscript file.

**Microsoft Word Files**

Although this is not a preferred method, you may supply us with the files for your book styled in Microsoft Word, along with a hard-copy print out. We will change it into a print-quality PDF and send it back to you for checking. Depending on how the file has been set up, there may be a large amount of reflowing of the text, etc., which would need to be put right before the final proof stage. If this were the case, we would inform you of the cost if you wanted us to correct the problem.
# Specimen Quote Form

Reproduced below is a specimen quotation, which clearly breaks down the costs for each production stage.

You may find this form useful. It gives an estimate of the profit that you could achieve if you sell all the copies you print. Possibly more importantly it shows how many copies you need to sell to get your money back: to break even.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YPS Self publishing summary of costs</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Title</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Publisher</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Print quantity</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Selling price</strong></td>
</tr>
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## Costs before printing

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<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Copy-editing</td>
<td>£</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Page design and page layout</td>
<td>£ 175</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cover design</td>
<td>£ 140</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bar code</td>
<td>£ 20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-printing costs</td>
<td>£ 335</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Printing and binding costs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>As per YPS quote</td>
<td>£ 2,165</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Print costs</td>
<td>£ 2,165</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Distribution and promotion costs (optional)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Distribution for 6 months</td>
<td>£ 150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Including on Internet bookshop 6 months</td>
<td>£ 90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promotion in buyers’ guide twice</td>
<td>£ 90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marketing pack</td>
<td>£ 175</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distribution fixed costs</td>
<td>£ 505</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total cost. If not a single copy sold £ 3,005

## Profitability

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sales</td>
<td>£ 7,950</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average discount*</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sales per copy</td>
<td>£ 6.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Net sales</td>
<td>£ 6,519</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Publishing costs                  | £ 3,005|
| Post and packing cost per copy    | £ 1.20 |
| Costs                             | £ 1,200|
| Profits                           | £ 2,314|
| Number of books you need to sell to break even | 565 |

* The discount is an estimate, some books will be sold at full price others at a discount to booksellers.
SUMMARY OF YPS CHARGES

Below is a summary of all YPS charges. Remember you do not have to use all our services, just the ones you need.

EDITING AND DESIGN

Copy-editing (need to quote on your specification)

Page and cover design £150

*This is for a simple page design, such as a novel. For more complex page designs we would provide a quotation.*

Page by page layout £150

Figures, tables and pictures £8 each

Proofreading (need to quote on your specification)

Barcode £20

PRINTING AND BINDING

(need to quote on your specification)

Additional bound proof if required £20

WAREHOUSING AND DISTRIBUTION SERVICE

Cost for six months £150

Post and packing per copy £1.20

Internet bookshop for six months £90

PROMOTION AND MARKETING

Inclusion in buyers’ guide, per entry £45

Marketing pack £175

PAYMENT

We require 50% of the order value when we supply the bound proofs. The balance is payable when we deliver the books. We can accept payment by cash, cheque, credit card and BACS transfer.
The Road to Self Publishing
Fred Normandale

I’m from a fishing industry background and grew up in the Bottom End of Scarborough among some wonderful characters. My childhood and teenage years were unique. On leaving school I went to sea on local vessels and spent the next twenty-five years fishing from this historic port on various vessels, fishing in the company of these larger than life men.

Sadly these fishers are a dying breed, so when I came ashore in the early 1990s to concentrate on managing the numerous vessels I had become involved in, I said to my wife Dorothy, “someone should write about the old fishermen, their way of life and sense of humour. If not, they will have lived and died and their stories would die with them”.

Without hesitation she replied, “Get on with it then”.

I thought for a while about this then took up the challenge. I bought a small AppleMac laptop and began writing and compiling all the anecdotes and moving, humorous and informative tales until my collection was one of seventy or eighty short stories. These ranged from a paragraph to two or three pages in length. At this point I was recording the stories and not knowing what to do with them.

One day Dorothy, returning from a visit to the library, gave me a leaflet from The Arvon Foundation at Lumb Bank, near Hebden Bridge, West Yorkshire, offering a five-day, residential writing course. Here was an opportunity to learn to write.

I spent an early summer period at this wonderful establishment and it was as if a light had been switched on in my head. With encouragement from the resident tutor of the week, Nicholas Royle, I realised I could introduce these characters as I wrote my own story about growing up in this wonderful environment.

After about ten years of on and off scribing, I eventually completed First of the Flood. I thought, “Yes”, I’ve done it. I’ll just find an agent then get the work published. How naive was I? It’s a jungle out there. With the assistance of a current Writers’ Yearbook, I singled out the agent I wanted to honour with my work. A tardy, unhelpful rejection came a little over three weeks later. When this had happened about a dozen times, and sometimes no reply at all, I decided to go directly to the publishers.

This did seem a more fruitful avenue and I sent out several sections of manuscript out having made contact. This avenue became a cul-de-sac. My work was parochial. The big players were looking for stuff that would make the international markets.

I was stymied. My sister Janet suggested self publishing. Not the vanity press where you pay to see your work in print, but a real print job by a printing and publishing company. She knew someone at York Publishing Services and arranged an appointment for me to see Dave Mercer at YPS.

This experience was wonderful after what had become three years of rejection. Dave helped me through the pitfalls of barcodes, ISBNs and copyright, all the things an aspiring author knows nothing of.
Barry Perks, the designer, turned my idea for a cover into a terrific work of art, almost bringing my characters back to life.

I ordered 1000 copies, as this was the most cost-effective number to print, and I didn’t think I’d be able to sell more than this amount. I hoped to sell half and break even.

It was my good fortune to launch *First of the Flood* in late October 2002. I had a grand ‘book launch’ in my local pub, inviting the Mayor and Consort. A splendid seafood (what else) buffet for family, the locals and the characters still around and featuring in the book was picked clean. There was a complimentary copy of the book for each.

Reviews were essential and I was fortunate to get local and regional newspapers interested and received an excellent write up in the national *Fishing News*. This gave me an opportunity to sell copies retail and recover postage.

The Christmas market was looming. I hawked copies to all the local bookshops and newsagents. Most were very friendly and helpful, though some haggled over discounts or required copies to be sent to their regional distributor so they could be sent back, at my expense. I was gob smacked when my entire stock sold in five weeks. Christmas was almost upon us when the second 1000 were produced, but these too went within eight months. There are now only a few remaining of the third edition of 1000.

The feedback from readers was fantastic. People stopped me in the street or rang up at home to say how much they’d enjoyed the tale and asked, “when are you doing another?”.

Book two, *Slack Water*, was launched, also in the *Leeds Arms*, in November 2004, via the same route, and with confidence I ordered 2000 copies. More than half have gone and though it’s always slower after Christmas, the books are still selling. Book one sold more copies on the back of the new volume.

The moral of this tale is, if you are confident you have a good product and cannot find your way through the mine field that is publishing, take your work to the market place yourself. You’ll have to work hard to sell your work and there’s no publicity machine other than your own efforts, but by this route you will see your work in print. It is unlikely, though not impossible, that you’ll get rich but you could make a modest profit and, as in my case, have the satisfaction of recording my social history for future generations. Watch this space for book three.

Fred Normandale
February 2005
“You have to be bright to write a book but you have to be a genius to sell it.”

So runs an old saying and it contains a lot of truth. Major publishers invest huge amounts of money and energy in marketing the books they produce, so it’s only reasonable that you should invest similarly.

OK, so you don’t have the financial clout of huge publishing companies but what you do have is your unique product: that book you’ve sweated into the small hours to write, that book you’ve ignored your family and friends to write, that book you’ve wanted all your life to write. So, if writing it is so important to you, then the least you can do is spend some time and energy in marketing it so that as many people read it as possible.

Now, you may be wishing you hadn’t started reading this, because you’re rather shy, rather introverted, not too keen on the limelight, in fact that’s why you’re a writer and not a salesperson. I sympathise. That’s true for me too. But, when I read a book by someone, I have a picture in my mind’s eye of the sort of person who has written that book. It may not be an accurate picture of that person, but it is a picture of the writer of that book. It is you the writer, that’s going to market, not you the mother, you the stamp-collector, or you the argumentative late-night wine-imbiber.

When I published my first crime novel, Be a Falling Leaf, I had to decide who Bob Bibby the writer was and create that brand. What follows are my notes on ‘How to market your book’. They are not exhaustive and they may not all work for you. But they are based on my real experience of self-publishing four crime novels and in marketing myself as a writer of three travel narratives.

Creating a Brand

Publishing Imprint

So, you’ve written your book, you’ve decided to self-publish it, and you’ve found a printer who will produce the agreed number of copies at a price that seems reasonable. That printer will have helped you acquire an ISBN, agree a price for the book and put a barcode on each copy. But what is your corporate identity? What is your brand?

The easiest way to create a brand is to choose a publishing imprint. You can’t choose Penguin or HarperCollins because someone’s already picked those, so choose something that’s unique to you and your book (and maybe books, because surely you’re not going to settle for just the one, are you?). I chose Pierrepoint Press for my crime novels, because Albert Pierrepoint was the last hangman in Britain and that seemed appropriate. It also allowed me to create a noose as the Pierrepoint logo and the strapline ‘Don’t hang up’.

✓ Select a publishing imprint, logo and strapline.
Writer Branding

Now you’ve created a brand for your book, you’re nearly ready to start marketing but there’s just one more bit of branding to be done: on you as the writer. You will have already begun this when you wrote the blurb for the book-jacket and the photograph of yourself that’s on the back cover. But how will you look to any journalist who comes to call, or any bookshop staff you visit, or any potential buyers? Think about it: have you ever seen a picture of Terry Pratchett without his hat on? Or of Bill Bryson without his beard? Or of Jacqueline Wilson without her glasses and spiked-up hair?

The thing I bought when my first book came out was a white jacket for those very early photo shoots with local journalists. I still wear it every time I appear as a writer: at book signings, at readings or talks I give, and in photographs. Always it says ‘This is Bob Bibby, Writer – Buy Me’.

✓ Decide on how you will present yourself as a writer.

Determining Your Market

There are thousands and thousands of books published in the UK every year, so how is your book going to stand out in this already-flooded marketplace? Why should anyone buy your book rather than someone else’s? Who is going to buy your book?

Friends and Relatives

Let’s start with you. You have relatives, you have friends, you have acquaintances. With any luck, you’ve got them altogether in your address book. They will all be curious to see this book you’ve been beavering away at for so long, so they are your first and most obvious market. You will want to give free copies to some of them; some of them (more than you expect) will want you to give free copies to them: resist the mean buggers! Even so, you can expect a reasonable amount of that immediate market to purchase your book.

✓ Make a list of names, addresses, phone numbers and email addresses of all your friends, relatives and acquaintances.

Local Community

(a) Media

Let’s move on to the town you live in or near to. The term ‘Local Writer’ can be a two-edged sword: for some it’s an immediate turn-off, whereas for others it evokes immediate interest. Remember, it is an important market for you.

First of all, you’re more likely to receive free publicity in local newspapers, radio and TV than you are from the national media, so your brand has a better chance of being known locally. So, you need to identify all the media outlets in your area: newspapers, radio stations, and TV stations. For each one you need to find the name of the person who might be interested.

✓ Make a list of names of all local media outlets, plus addresses, phone numbers and email addresses.
(b) Bookshops, etc.

Secondly, because of that publicity local people are more likely to have some knowledge of you when they are shopping for books. So, you need to identify all the local bookshops in your locality and other retail outlets that might be interested in stocking your books (I’ve tried newsagents, garages and garden centres, for example, with mixed success).

✓ Make a list of names of all local bookshops and other possible retail outlets, plus addresses, phone numbers and email addresses.

(c) Libraries

Thirdly, again helped by the publicity generated, libraries in your vicinity are likely to be interested in stocking your books. So, you need to identify all the local major public libraries in your area and then find out the name of the person responsible for library purchasing for each one (NB don’t bother with local branch libraries: all purchasing is done centrally, although branch librarians do usually have a say).

✓ Make a list of names of all local public libraries, plus addresses, phone numbers and email addresses.

(d) Other market outlets

Fourthly, depending on the specific nature of your book, you need to ask yourself whether there are any other obvious markets for selling it locally, e.g. local museums, tourist information centres, hotels. I’ve used all of the latter for selling my travel books. My first travel narrative, *Grey Paes and Bacon*, about a walk around the Black Country, went down well in local museums and tourist information centres, while my third, *Special Offa*, has sold especially well through the Offa’s Dyke Centre.

✓ Make a list of names of all other local market outlets, plus addresses, phone numbers and email addresses.

Special Interest

(a) Organisations

It is likely that you are a member of some organisation, maybe local or maybe national, which mails its members periodically. Those members are likely to be interested in a book by a fellow-member: just imagine if you were a member of the British Society of Undertakers and found out that one of your colleagues in Aberdeen had written a murder novel! So, find out how you can get yourself into that mailing, either by the inclusion of a flyer, or by purchasing some advertising space, or by arranging for an article about you to appear in the newsletter. My fourth crime novel, *The Llareggub Experience*, has a very strong Dylan Thomas background so I got it on sale in the Dylan Thomas Centre in Swansea.

✓ Identify organisations to which you belong for mailing, interviews, advertising, etc.
(b) Workplace

Whether or not you are currently in the workplace, you have a community that you have a special connection with regarding the people you work or have worked with. If it’s a big company, then the potential audience for your book is great; if it’s a small company, nevertheless you will have links with other small companies who know of you. Even that person who used to be in the next office to you and irritated you like mad with their stupid jokes will be interested in you and your book!

✓ Make a list of named people in your workplace, plus addresses, phone numbers and email addresses.

(c) Other marketing opportunities

It is possible that your book has a specific feature that might make it appealing to certain sectors of the community. Books on local history rarely have an interest beyond their locality but a novel set elsewhere has an obvious appeal to that elsewhere (most copies of my second crime novel *Bird on the Wing* sold on the Isle of Skye, where it was set) and a book about walking has an obvious appeal to walkers (lengthy extracts from my book about walking Offa’s Dyke, *Special Offa*, appeared in a free magazine published by the Wales Tourist Board called *Walking Wales*). My third crime novel, *The Liquidator*, has a background of a Wolverhampton Wanderers football match, so I paid for a small advertisement in the local fanzine.

✓ Identify other marketing opportunities for your book.

**PRE-PUBLICATION: PLANNING FOR THE MOMENT**

Now you have determined who your potential readers (and crucially buyers) are, you need to develop a marketing plan to lead you up to and beyond publication date.

*Publication Date*

First of all, decide a date for official publication. This doesn’t have to be the day you receive copies of the book from your printer, but it must be a day when you can guarantee having the copies.

✓ Select an official publication date.

*Pre-Publication Publicity*

It’s always a good idea to seek to generate some interest before your book actually appears. For instance, as I’ve suggested above, if you belong to some organisation with a newsletter, get them to run a piece about your forthcoming book (with date of publication). For my first crime novel, *Be a Falling Leaf*, I arranged for an association I am a member of to print an interview with me about my new career (my questions, my answers: that’s how it’s done!). I also arranged for the organisation I had recently been employed by to run a similar interview in its house journal.

✓ Arrange for an article/interview in the newsletter of an organisation/company you belong to.
Mail Order Flyers

If you’re thinking of trying to get mail orders, you will need to plan out and get printed a flyer with details of your book and an order form for potential buyers. Remember that your order form needs to include the address, phone number and email address of the buyer and the address to which orders should be sent. You will need to decide whether to charge for postage and packing, or whether to absorb such costs in your overall charge.

✓ Plan a flyer for mail ordering.

Advance Review Copies

Do you know anyone who might write an advance review for use in your publicity – someone with special knowledge of your subject perhaps, or a local/national celebrity, or another writer? If so, send them an advance copy (do your own typescript – I always do mine as two-column on landscape in Point 10 font size) and ask for a review you can use. For The Liquidator, I got a local radio chat-show host, who was also President of the Wolves Supporters club, to do a review.

✓ Send off advance review copies.

Promotional Sheets

You need to have prepared a promotional sheet for your book to accompany the specimen copies you intend to go for reviews or for library scrutiny. This should include the following information, laid out properly: title, author, ISBN, format (e.g. paperback), dimensions, publication date, price, number of pages. A brief description of the book, say about 200 words, and a further 50–60 words about the writer, including reference to previous titles, should then follow. Finally, give contact details.

✓ Prepare promotional sheet.

Business Forms

If you’re going to do this properly, you’re going to have to have business stationery, delivery notes and invoices. Get blanks of these prepared in advance. I created my own on the computer: it’s not difficult, but you need to find a way of keeping records of deliveries and of invoices sent. Some bookshops are notoriously slow in paying up.

✓ Prepare all necessary business stationery.

Publication: Announcing Your Presence

The Press Release

The first piece of advice I read about marketing your own book was ‘If you can write a book, you can write a press release’. And it’s absolutely true. So here’s a few tips about writing press releases.

First of all, work on a catchy title. My first crime novel, Be a Falling Leaf, concerned the murder of a school inspector, which is the job I was doing at the time, so my strapline was ‘Inspector Turns to Crime’.

Your press release should be no more than one side of A4. The title and the first paragraph must catch the reader’s interest, so include details of where you
are from and summarise your book succinctly and in a lively manner. Second
and third paragraphs should embellish this, preferably including a quote either
from you (‘I’m really thrilled that my first book is about to appear’) or from
some tame noteworthy person, maybe one of your pre-reviewers.

Remember to put FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE or EMBARGOED
UNTIL ??? (publication date), plus phone contact details.

Press releases should be posted: don’t fax or email them, as they get
chucked immediately.

✓ Prepare your press release.

The Launch Party

This is really just self-indulgence but you’ve given birth to this wonderful
thing, your book, and it (and you) deserves a party, so book a room in your
local pub, get the landlord/lady to lay on some sandwiches and invite your
mates for a drink. Try inviting a local celebrity or bigwig to make a short
speech (for my Isle of Skye crime book, Bird on the Wing, I got the local
postmaster and the local band leader to turn up). Try inviting the local
media: you never know, it may just be a free drink opportunity they can’t
turn down (for the same book I got the local radio producer to attend).

Yes, it will cost you a few bob, but you’ll probably sell some books
and the word of mouth will start from there. So do it!

✓ Book a venue for your book launch and send invitations
out.

Mailings

This is the really busy part of the operation because, once you’ve got
your publication date arranged and your press release ready to go and
your launch party set up, you need to be mailing all your contacts to
start the selling process. Don’t panic! It doesn’t all have to be done at
once but you need to be systematic.

(a) Bookshops and other retail outlets

The most important contacts in the early stages are the bookshops and
other retail outlets, because that’s the first place that punters will go to
if they’ve seen or heard about you in the local media. Write to them
before the publication date, enclosing a copy of the promotional sheet.
A few days later, phone each and every one of them, tell them about the
other promotional plans (press release, advance reviews, launch party, etc.),
ask them if they’ve seen your letter and if they are interested in stocking
copies. You’ll need to be persuasive because they get a lot of requests but
most local bookshops, in my experience, will take a few copies at 35%
discount and on a sale or return basis. When you receive orders, agree a
delivery date and prepare a delivery note to accompany the order.

✓ Get orders from bookshops and other retail outlets.

(b) Mail order flyers

If you’ve decided on this marketing strategy, now is the time to send out all
your flyers to friends, relatives, acquaintances, work colleagues,
organisation mailing lists, etc. This is a costly business, so use 2nd class
mail and the cheapest envelopes you can find (always buy in bulk). Then
make sure you have enough packets of the right size ready for when the
deluge of orders rolls in! How can they resist?

✓ Post mail order flyers.

(c) Libraries

Less urgent, because their ordering mechanisms are slower, but not less
important is contacting the local libraries. I always send a copy of the book,
together with a promotional sheet, and a covering letter saying that I will
sell them the book at the full price but that, if they order five or more, they
can have a 35% discount – seems to work! No need usually to follow up,
unless you hear nothing within about a month.

✓ Get orders from libraries.

(d) Other market outlets

Assuming you’ve identified other possible stockists of your books, now is
the time to treat them exactly like the bookshops – send a preliminary
letter and promotional sheet, then follow up with a phone call and agree
delivery times.

✓ Get orders from other market outlets.

POST-PUBLICATION: KEEPING SALES GOING

This is the bit they never tell you in the books. You tend to believe that
once you’ve gone through all the stages of producing your book,
announcing its arrival, and making it available, it will sell itself. Unless
you’re very lucky, this simply ain’t so. OK, so your initial sales will come
from the launch of the book on to an unsuspecting public, but, if you want
it to keep selling, you are going to have to do some real hard work.

Keeping Records

It is crucial that you develop a good system for keeping track of all your
book sales, partly to ensure you get paid and partly because buyers of one
book might want more copies or might want future books.

I keep separate databases for mail order purchasers, for libraries,
and for bookshops, all with full details of names, addresses, phone
numbers and email addresses. For mail order buyers this is because
I know they are a likely audience for subsequent books. For libraries
it’s because I need to check that payments have been made (public
libraries are normally dependent on their town/county treasurer’s
department, which can be a slow process). For bookshops it’s because
I need to make a judgement as to when to send an invoice (NB if
you’re using the big chains like Waterstones, WH Smith and
Ottakars, you need to send to their main office, not to the individual
bookshops).

Blatant Self-Promotion

I had never heard of this until I discovered an American site designed
by writers to help each other in marketing their books. Remember what
I said earlier about you as a brand? This is where you as brand comes
in. In order to keep your sales going, you have to develop yourself as a
brand and get potential readers interested in you and your book(s)
through blatant self promotion, or BSP as it’s known in the USA. Here’s a few of the things that I’ve done.

(a) Bookmarks

This is a surprisingly cheap way of advertising yourself. Design yourself a bookmark, get your local printer to make you 1000 of them (or 5000 if you can afford it) and give them away. Stuff one in every letter you send out. Insert one in every book you deliver to bookshops, libraries, museums, individuals. Leave them lying around in your local pub or cafe. If you don’t know how to design one, just look at the things that Amazon send out or ask your printer for advice.

(b) Websites

Some writers swear by websites; others, like me, are more dubious. Yes, I have a website (www.bobbibby.co.uk) and no, it didn’t cost an arm and a leg to create. Yes, it tells you pretty much everything about each of my books and how to purchase them and provides a link for contacting me. But I don’t know how much good it has done in terms of direct sales. I’ve had a few contacts through it, usually from people from my past who want to know if ‘Bob Bibby the Writer’ is the same person they knew millions of years ago.

The problem with websites, so people tell me, is that unless they change regularly, people stop going to them, and I keep forgetting to add in new information. Besides, in the slow gestation of a book, there’s not an awful lot to write about. I’m still thinking about ways of improving my website.

Of course, if you’re an ICT wiz, you can build your own, but then maybe that’s what you want to spend your life doing. Whatever, if you have a website, you need to publicise it, so make sure that your email signature includes it, that it’s included on your business stationery and on any other publicity you send out (press releases, bookmarks, invoices, delivery notes, etc.).

(c) Bookshop signings

Try to persuade your local bookshop to let you do a book-signing session. I’ve done a couple of those in the past but tend to fight shy of them nowadays, if only because, of the three people who spoke to me on the last occasion, two of them only came to ask if they could have a biscuit!

If you’re going down this route, you need to be more active than I was. Don’t just sit behind a table with your books and a plate of biscuits. You’ll feel like some kind of museum exhibit anyway, so get up and walk about. Take something with you to give away, bookmarks are a good idea, then tell people who you are and ask them if they’d like to have a look at your books. If you get them this far, offer to personalise the book with a dedication if they want to purchase. Then, and only then, give them a biscuit!

(d) More press releases

Don’t think that your initial press release announcing the launch of your book to an overexcited public will be enough. The book needs continual plugging, so find occasions when follow-up press releases might be sent. For example, I’ve sent them at particular milestones, such as the sale of
1000 copies or hitting high spots in some category of Amazon’s sales chart,* or when I’ve had an email from some distant part of the universe (get someone you know to send one), or when some other promotional activity has been successful (e.g. when Walking Wales published lengthy extracts of *Special Offa*).

*Amazon’s sales charts can be very deceptive. Remember, there are lots of categories and sub-categories. For instance, *Special Offa* features in the Travel Writing Wales sub-category of Travel Writing, whereas my second travel narrative, *Dancing with Sabrina*, features in the Travel Writing United Kingdom sub-category. Selling three or four books in a week can move you an amazing number of places higher. Unscrupulous writers have been known to organise their mates to buy four copies on the same day, thus propelling their book to a high chart position. Shameful behaviour!

(e) Advertisements

Buying advertising space in most local newspapers is expensive but it’s worth inquiring about advertising rates in free newspapers, in local magazines, and in other smaller circulation issues, such as parish newsletters, fanzines, community magazines, church newsletters, etc. I bought advertising space for *Bird on the Wing*, my Isle of Skye novel, for three issues in a free newspaper produced for holiday-makers in the Hebrides.

**Giving Talks**

Remember what I said about you as a brand? Well, this is where you as the brand can really make a difference. I have come to the view that people are more likely to buy books by someone they know a little. That’s why they buy books by celebrities – why else would someone buy Ginger Spice’s autobiography? So I now spend significant amounts of my time, white jacket and all, giving talks about one or other of my books to audiences in my area.

You’ll be surprised how many groups there are out there desperate for speakers. Rotary clubs meet weekly and give you dinner as well, usually rubber chicken; women’s institutes and townswomen’s guilds meet monthly and do a good line in home-made cakes; many churches have fellowship groups; there are loads of senior citizens’ groups; local history groups abound. Believe me, there is no shortage. And once you’re on the circuit, word spreads rapidly.

You need to work out your talk, of course, and, if you’re not a natural public speaker you may need help but remember, it is you as brand that is performing, not that shy person who actually wrote the book. So learn a few jokes, practise reading a few juicy bits from your book, and go out and sell yourself and your books. You’ll be surprised how you can keep sales going. I reckon I’ve now given my talk on my first travel book, *Grey Paes and Bacon*, over 100 times (always in the white jacket, of course) and just ordered a further reprint.

I make a modest charge for my talk, which does little more than cover my travel costs, but my aim, as I keep telling myself, even when I return home with the same number of books I set out with, is to sell, sell, sell.
**Final Thoughts**

I spent much of my life as a teacher who always wanted to be a writer. Well, now I am one. I currently have seven titles on the market, an eighth one is at present being readied for market, and two further ones are at various stages of gestation. When I began, I never realised that I would have to learn so many new skills. Naively, I believed that, once I had written the masterpiece, the rest would look after itself. I know now that, unless you’re extremely fortunate, this isn’t going to happen.

Major publishers like to entice us with stories about J.K. Rowling writing her first Harry Potter book at a cafe table when she was living on 50p a week, or of William Golding’s *Lord of the Flies* being rejected by 7000 publishers before it was finally accepted, but these are all part of the publicity that publishers engage in to get us to buy their books. Unless you’re very lucky, this probably won’t happen to you. Yes, some self-published books do get taken up by major publishers. Yes, some books do sell themselves. But for many of us, marketing our books is the only way we’re going to sell them. The advice I’ve given above should help you.

Finally, this whole experience can be and should be a lot of fun. I’ve met loads of people I wouldn’t normally meet, I’ve developed presentational skills I never knew I had, and I’ve sold loads of books. And my white jacket is just back from the dry cleaners ready for some more action.

*Carpe diem!*

**Bob Bibby**  
**February 2005**

(Find out more at www.bobbibby.co.uk)

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