

How to get published: a local author tells his tale...

☒ Have you ever wondered how hard it is to get a book published? Well we have just had someone who has take 74 years.

Actually Peter (Ed) Johnson has not been writing that long, he has told us that over the last eighteen months he has written over half the next book.

He has had an interesting history, born in 1950 into a society where the war still had an impact, he still has his ration book but that stopped in 1953.

Peter likes to simplify his life, at ten he was playing with Meccano which gave him a degree of dexterity and also simple electronics using batteries to power early circuit boards as well as Hornby trains which needed an understanding of electrical connections.

At twenty he had a career “first job” working on early computers, a job that had not existed ten years previously.

By thirty he had done some research and development with a computer based cheque printing company. He also ran the production line for the equipment manufacture.

That gave him the background and confidence to start, in 1981, a computer maintenance company. As this was the middle of the Thatcher recession it was a big risk.

However it worked and by his forties the company was successful and Peter was very busy, a young family, ten or more employees in the business but still ambitious. He does ask himself though, “how did I find time to do charity work as well”?

The business was sold before the millennium and a different direction beckoned, a local internet business recruited him to help with managing installations and overseeing setting up their internet service provider (ISP) hubs.

By his early fifties he was suffering a mid life crisis, so what was it to be? A mistress? A sports car? Peter chose the latter, but instead of buying one he bought a chassis from a Lotus/Caterham 7 and bought and made parts to complete the car and get it through the complex Special Vehicle test.

By the time he was 60 the internet was getting very complex and single people were beginning to struggle, there were pensions available to take so at 61 he retired, well sort of.

Buying a run down bungalow and restoring it from the ground up was a challenge that absorbed him for well over a year. It was around this time he met his second wife, his first had sadly passed away with cancer in 2006.

This led to a new beginning and while moving from the bungalow to his present home there was a few months in a rented house. It was here that the first book really started to take shape, unfortunately the new home was a mess and getting that up together stalled the process, as did getting married, buying a second home in France, more renovations, and it was only about three years ago that Peter started to find time to work on the book.

The publishing process was difficult, a lot of rejections until he discovered Austin Macualy who are a mainstream publisher but take on a lot of new authors.

Peter describes doing ten emails a day to publishers and agents and getting replies from about ten percent, but he is not someone to give up as you can tell from his compressed life story above.

Asked what he would say to someone who has an idea for a book

he is really upbeat, “get the story together, write the first ten thousand words and send them off, be ready to get a lot of negative feedback, all authors have had to face it. When its published you will be part of a very small section in our society, a published author and I cant describe how that feels”.

Why Am I Here?: Jane’s Story by Ed Johnson is published by Austin Macaulay Publishers (ISBN 9781035810000) and is available from [Amazon](#) and all good bookshops.

