

New historical novel set in Bristol and Shropshire published

Thursday 10 October, 2024

- *A true tale of attempted murder, mystery and love that marked a landmark case in British legal history*

Bristol, UK, 10th October 2024 –

Bristol-born author Frederick J Hillberg is celebrating the publication of his new historical novel, **'The Dangerous Journey'**. Set in 1840's Victorian England, the story brings to life the brutal attempted murder on Bristol accountant William Miller Mackreth in the Shropshire town of Ludlow - a crime that reverberated across Britain and the colonies. Based on real events, this gripping tale of mystery, love and endurance, is written by William's great-great-grandson who recreates a moving and faithful account of the shocking attack by the enigmatic Josiah Mister, William's recovery and the sensational trial that followed.

The author Frederick J Hillberg, who is retired, shared his insights into researching and writing his great-great-grandfather's extraordinary near-death encounter over 150 years ago, "I began working on the project several years ago when investigating our family tree. I knew that William Mackreth was a wealthy businessman in Bristol but it wasn't until a visit to the Bristol Archives and a reference to the 'Ludlow Chest' that the full story began to unfold."

A landmark case in British legal history that shocked Victorian society

A trip to Ludlow revealed an unexpected truth: William Mackreth had been at the heart of a famous local tale of mistaken identity, culminating in a vicious attack with a razor blade at the well-known Angel Inn (still standing) and became a landmark legal case in British history. "As I delved deeper, I was amazed at the extent to which my great-great-grandfather's ordeal had captured the attention of Victorian society. Even Charles Dickens is believed to have mentioned the case in a letter to a friend." Hillberg added.

The novel not only recounts the events in Ludlow but also paints a vivid picture of life in Bristol during the era, highlighting Mackreth's struggle to recover with the help of his fiancée, Jane. Hillberg explores a time when Bristol was governed by 'Bristol Time' and 'Bristol Nails,' and where an 'upstairs downstairs' culture was still prevalent and the scourge of cholera outbreaks spared no one.

The author added, "It is a remarkable tale, almost stranger than fiction, not only due to the nature of the crime and the sheer number of coincidences but also the fact that my great-great-grandfather survived the attempted murder that left him scarred for life. I am incredibly proud to have been able to bring this piece of family history to light. I think the book will appeal strongly to anyone with an interest in local history, crime and mystery, or a touch of romance."

When not writing, Fred is an active figure in his local community and his pastimes include gardening, photography, coin & stamp collecting and reading historical biographies. In 2023 Fred published his first children's book, *Brave Cat Millie* (ISBN: 9781916095069).

The paperback version of *The Dangerous Journey* (ISBN: 9781839528200) published by **Brown Dog Books** (<https://www.browndogbooks.uk/>) is priced at £9.99 (RRP) and is available to order from all bookshops from 17th October as well as on-line. An eBook version priced at £3.99 will be available via Amazon (Kindle), Kobo devices and Apple iBooks.

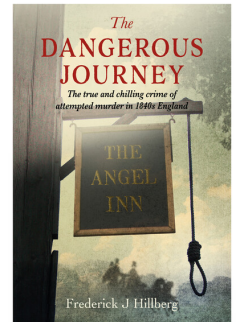
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PHOTOGRAPHY:-

A range of high resolution photos are available on request or use the download links of high res images below

Front Cover of *The Dangerous Journey* : <https://mbf.cc/g4Cam2>
 Freddie Hillberg head & shoulders shot : <https://mbf.cc/Vcz6IK>
 Freddie Hillberg with his new book, *The Dangerous Journey* : <https://mbf.cc/67YsqH>
 The Angel Inn, Ludlow Source: Richard Tisdale <https://mbf.cc/9Z6ebT>

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Further images of William Miller Mackreth are available on request.

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