



A chat with...

Glynn Burridge

“I think as a writer we are always evolving, in the same way people evolve in different areas”

Renowned Author Glynn Burridge has been living and working in Seychelles for 34 years. His experience of the Seychelles Islands, Creole culture, and his explorations living in different parts of the world has placed him in a strong position to write and share his knowledge. He sat down with TODAY to share more information about himself and his writing. He is the author of “Voices” and “Kolony” among others.

Who is Glynn Burridge?

I am an English man, born in the south of England. My parents took me to Iran at the age of five and that has been like my kind of spiritual home although I do not live there anymore. I was educated in Iran at the British school in Tehran, the capital. I went back to boarding school in the U.K. and later joined Manchester University to study Oriental languages. But all the time over the holidays, I went back to Iran where my parents were living. I was so attached to the place that when the time came for my parents to retire back to the UK, I said “Well, I am not coming; I am staying here.” I stayed in Iran and did a couple of things.

I ended up working for the Iranian Royal family, as a tutor to the young King. But then, I had my own translation agency. I was a translator and interpreter in Farsi, the language of Iran. In 1975, Prince Chahram, the same people I was working for, announced that he bought an island in Seychelles and nobody knew where it was.

This is where we came to D’Arros Island after the revolution, and I ended up looking after the island for him until 1998. We lived like real islanders. We had schooners coming down because D’Arros Island is 140 miles into the ocean. We had a beautiful house that we used to rent to the European glitterati.

In 1998, I decided that it was enough for me on the islands, so I came to the main Island of Mahé and was kidnapped “for lack of a better word” (laughs...) by the ministry of Tourism. They told me, “You have been in the Seychelles for a long time, you know Seychelles very well, you write and we are looking for a copy writer.” This was the time when the government was just beginning to get serious about its tourism and was trying to put up a campaign with foreign agencies and really market the tourism industry properly.

I have been doing that ever since although right now it’s on a consultancy basis and at the same time I do my own writing.

How did growing up in Iran shape your writing skills?

Well, I have always been fond of the word and I think working in Iran and as a copywriter definitely gave me a love of language and expression, being exact in the way I express myself, and I think it worked for me a lot.

What is the first book you published?

My first book was “VOICES”, which is a selection of Seychelles’ short stories. It is largely based on the life we were living on the island. I remember my then boss telling

me one day that, “If you don’t write these experiences down then one day this life we are living will be lost and nobody will remember it.”

I took in his word and did it. When I was half way through, I stopped writing because I was not doing it full-time. I had my work, I was traveling around the world and I was also doing other things. It took me about three years to complete writing the 625 page book. I got it published in 2008/2009 and that’s the last creative book I have written.

How did publishing your first book change your process of writing?

I think as a writer we are always evolving, in the same way people evolve in different areas, it’s like a muscle. The more we use our abilities and the different ways we use it, causes it to alter and change. Writing the first book taught me that getting published is extremely difficult because today almost everyone can write.

What are some of the projects you have contributed to in your writing years?

I have contributed to a lot of different organisations; National Geographic, BBC, and CNN, all with some description of the Seychelles Island.



authors but I have worked with many amazing artists like Michael Adams. I did the foreword for his beautiful book of “SKETCHES”. I think when you work with other artists it broadens your mind, broadens your skills, gives you a different way of looking at things,

from your readers?

My books are available on Amazon and as a kindle e-book. There is this comment I received from ‘Richard Jenner’ who said, “He is up there with the best in terms of novel writing”, I have received quite a number of flattering reviews from different people. The book ‘VOICES’ continues to be popular. I have been interviewed a number of times about it. BBC actually reviewed it for me; they called it “beautiful and powerful”, so well, I have been lucky enough.

Do you have any projects that you would like to work on in the future?

Well, I think validating some of Seychelles’ unknown history. I know that there are, for example, a lot of photographic collections here in private hands, those pictures may be sitting in a drawer somewhere just getting old and faded.

Along with my business partner Francois Cordey, who is an extremely good creative designer, we would like to get access to those collections and make interesting collections of these photographs and bring Seychelles history to life.

Apart from working for the Seychelles Tourism Board and writing, what is your day like from the time you wake up?

You know I am lucky since I work three days a week, but having said that, as a writer you must have a certain discipline. Particularly when I am writing I wake up at 5 o’clock. Living in the Southern part of the island, I have to leave my home at 6am to get to Victoria in

time for work or anything I have going on.

I like to listen to the news on the radio and relax as I ponder a little bit about the plans I have for the day. I like being in control of my programme and work. So after having my breakfast, I feed my dogs and water my plants then set for my days activities.

If you didn’t write, what would you do to earn a living?

I think in one way or another I would still be a writer. I have had a passion for travel writing. Go to some of the lesser known places on the planet and write it up. My plan is to go to Moscow, catch a train all the way to China which takes around 2 weeks and write about that experience. I am not so keen on crowds because I lived in D’Arros for quite some time, so visiting these lesser known places would be great for my artistic self.

What is the most difficult part of your artistic process?

Writing is a little bit like, imagining you have a skeleton; you have a star of an idea and translating that idea into a fully fleshed out skeleton. You may have part of the puzzle but then you’ve got to complete the reasoning puzzle and that is a mental process.

It takes time, imagination, and trial and error, but then a little bit like a song; it starts to sound right and gradually day by day you think about it more and more. I work on a big board and start to jot down where I am, where I want to go and where I need to get to in between. Eventually, like a skeleton, I put flesh and bones to the body and it’s complete.

how you write, how you get your first idea, how you follow through. People are fascinated by it but they don’t necessarily understand it.

How can you as an artist help people appreciate writers more?

I think you should do this through your work, trying to bring a fondness of the written word to your audience and help them understand what it’s about. I think I hit a nerve with my book of short stories because these were familiar stories particularly with the older Seychellois.

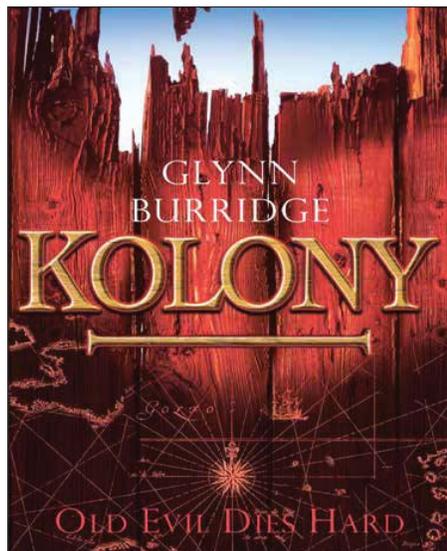
They remember that lifestyle, either from seeing or learning from their grandparents. And so it made sense to them.

As we wind up the interview, do you have any advice you would like to share with young writers who look up to you?

Try to get familiar with the written word, read books. If you particularly like a book, read it over and over again, try and find what the secret of that book is, what makes people read it and why it’s successful so that you own that book, maybe it will give you ideas for your writing. Like I said before, writing is a muscle; you must use it every day. Even if you carry a note book, if you hear something you like, or somebody tells you something interesting, note it down.

Any quote that you live by every day?

(Laughing...) If something looks too good to be true it normally is, secondly, know where your power lies in life because when you do so, you will be able to use it and diffuse it into different things.

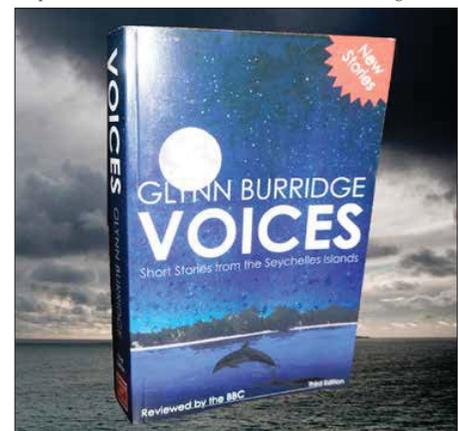


You have worked with different artists in the past, how have they contributed to your growth as a writer?

I haven’t really worked with many

it lends you another perspective and dimension on life and therefore on your work.

Would you kindly share at least one of your best book reviews



Do people appreciate authors?

A lot of people don’t really understand the writing process, like

Lastly, recognize what you are good at, and make yourself better at it.