

CHOATE ROAD INTERVIEW MARCH 08

Winter has been brutal and I wanted to get away. I've long been a fan of the UK publishers and writers so I thought that maybe I would travel across the sea to escape my cabin fever. I had heard of a new fiction outfit called BLACK HOUND, run by the husband and wife team of *John and Charlotte Emma Gledson*. But would they talk to me?

I knew from a brief phone conversation that these were people of high moral standing. And I have never been. The pressure was on. So I painted my dingy to look like a yacht and invited them aboard as I docked. I hoped they would notice the immense and painstaking trouble I went through in finding the perfect seat cushions.

Hello! So glad you both could be with me today

JG: Hi Greg, I'm so grateful and honoured to be asked to take part in this interview. Nice cushions!

CEG: Thanks Greg, the pleasure is all mine! I am thrilled that we are taking part in this interview.

Yes...Shoot and score. Thanks for complimenting my cushions. They were nothing, really. Let's do introductions, shall we? Although you are professionally known as Charlotte Emma Gledson, your close friends know you as 'Lottee'. John, in the spirit of fairness would it be alright if I called you 'Peaches'?

JG: As you may know I spent some time in the Royal Navy and would prefer if you could call me Gladiola the Gorgeous ;-)

CEG: I call him a cantankerous old fart, so 'Peaches' is fine!

The Royal Navy! That's British, isn't it? Oops, everyone is into political correctness nowadays. So what is the proper term...British, English or UKers?

JG: How about Bringlish?

CEG: Toffs!

Do you ever listen to your own accents and giggle at how cool you are?

JG: It's difficult to do that when everyone else sounds exactly the same!

CEG: I hear my voice and I hate it. Where I live there is a strong southern accent, John's is northern, so to me I sound like a posh tart trying too damn hard, but this IS my real accent/voice and you can take it or leave it!

More importantly, why do you hate the French so much?

JG: Have you been to France?

CEG: The shops close for 2 hours at lunchtime. It's a bugger when you have run out of bread. I know this, as my family live out there!

Tell me about BLACK HOUND. How did you come up with name?

JG: Black Hound actually arose some time ago in a different incarnation, predominantly as a promotional entity. I was involved with an outfit called the CFZ (Centre for Fortean Zoology) and was promoting their activities and advising them on ways to push their activities AND publications and as I have always had a fascination with folklore tales of black dogs so I thought 'why not Black Hound'.

CEG: I love dogs!

This is a tricky time for publishers to launch. Is there a particular focus for BLACK HOUND?

JG: The primary aim is to establish ourselves as a means to promote up and coming talent, through publishing material and promoting both the printed work and the authors.

CEG: Ditto. A launching pad for new writers to gain confidence and then to grow independently into any direction they feel their strengths lie.

You're well connected in both the UK and the USA. What do you think is the biggest difference between British and American writers?

JG: Bad spelling! Only joking. I think that the main difference is that American and indeed I mean North American (Canadians also) tend to be more open and willing to discuss all aspects of their writing experiences and are also more willing to embrace new means to get their material out there. That is not to say that there are not British writers who adopt this approach (Indeed all of the British guys I am currently in contact with are highly supportive and talented) but I have experienced more negative feedback and opposition to new talent from the UK than in the US almost to the point where certain UK presses have an elitist attitude to their authors and will do a great deal to prevent new talent rising in prominence. (I will probably get into trouble for this).

CEG: From what I have noticed there is not a great difference to be honest. I feel it all depends on the individual. Maybe some Americans focus on the graphic side of writing and some Brits more subtle? With me, I love to be graphic and shocking, but I try and portray it in a finer way, if that's at all possible! Less blatant, but still as shocking.

Charlotte has a best seller in The LONELY TREE and your upcoming anthology is bound to be very popular as well. Walk with me, talk with me.

JG: Our first publication Charlotte Emma Gledson's *The Lonely Tree and other Twisted Tales of Torment*, is available on Amazon.co.uk. This will be available on Amazon.com soon, so watch this space! Our next release *Atrium Tempestas* will be available on Amazon.com and Amazon.co.uk.

CEG: Amazon all the way baby!

ATRIUM TEMPESTAS is the anthology? That's like some kind of foreign language for the 'Dark Storm'. How interesting and a fine chance for me to show off my intellect.

JG: The basic idea was to bring a touch of the surreal and the fantastic to the horror genre and I believe that we have some real gems in the collection.

CEG: This book is brimming with oodles of talent, and I was amazed at the different perspectives each author adopts when it comes to expressing horror and fantasy. We have some twisted but talented puppies out there!

Is there a formula you use when putting your books together?

JG: Charlotte is a very methodical person and tries to complete the process in a logical manner but I get in the way with my chaotic hap-hazard approach. Between the two of us we manage to get from submission to printed copy without too many hitches.

CEG: John focuses on spelling and grammar; I focus on story, fluidity and dialogue. We work well together; we know each others strengths and weaknesses, and things have the habit of balancing out this way.

You two are such a cool sharing couple. You are writers, editors and have a love of horror. Name one thing that John can do that Charlotte can't and one thing Charlotte can do that John can't.

JG: Pee standing up! Honestly though I think that Charlotte is far better at keeping the ball rolling with promotion and keeping in touch with people. This is reflected in her writing also, I feel, her empathic ability to get into the psyche of the protagonist is at times uncanny and that something of which I am little jealous.

CEG: John can spell! I have always been a bad speller, the Dyslexia does tend to rear its ugly head, but thank God for spell check! Writing wise, John is more direct, to the point, I tend to meander!

My wife has a crush on John Taylor of Duran Duran and I think it's a cute and foolish thing. Charlotte has been very vocal about her lustful wanting of that Mr. Bean

character. John, does it bother you that your wife has a crush on a guy who puts his head in a turkey?

JG: Ah but you see Mr. Bean and I share so many traits, he is just far better looking.

CEG: I adore Mr. Bean, and his suit and tie is always so meticulous! But I have 'a thing' for *Sean Bean*, Boromir from LOTR's and the Hitcher. However, can he make me laugh like John does and Mr. Bean - (turkey head)? I very much doubt it. Laughter for me is the biggest turn on, and John is a pro!

Yes, I've heard ladies love to laugh. I'm, um, going out to buy a joke book right after this interview...You have children. How do you handle the fact that you are both horror writers around them?

JG: As both the boys are a bit older, both teenagers, they love horror and think that we are weird so we have no problems with them. My daughter and youngest son quite like the slightly scary stories we banter around in order to thrash out an idea, we keep it tame of course.

CEG: The kids fear my collection of ventriloquist dummies and the mass of porcelain dolls more than my warped writers mind!

You have a collection of dummies and dolls? That's not so scary. Hey, look, our time has run out. Thanks so much for talking with me today about BLACK HOUND.

JG: And thank you Greg, I feel that we have arrived at a very special place.

CEG: It's been a pleasure. Always a joy to pet the werpig and to have a wee chat!

I usually like to...I guess you'd say 'stalk' the people I interview. Watch them through their bathroom window or hide in the backseat of their car. But I just don't get out to England as much as I'd like to. Where can I find out all the dirty deets about you guys?

JG: Full details are on our website www.blackhound.co.uk

Any last words of wisdom you can share with your peeps?

JG: Words of Wisdom? Something I have always lived by and always had faith in are the immortal words of the great British philosopher Martin Clunes; 'If you throw enough balls at enough coconuts, sooner or later you will a fish.' Also another favourite quote is 'Where there is no imagination, there is no horror' - Sir Arthur Conan Doyle. You can find this on our Black Hound website on its opening page.

CEG: 'It is precisely when we have suffered defeat that we can determine to win and open the path to future victory'.

I enjoy this one... 'Dolls can't come to life and kill you, son'. Well, I need to get out of here before it gets dark. Thanks again for the chat, BLACK HOUND!

Did you hear that? Sounded like porcelain. Very porcelainy. John? Where did you guys go? Charlotte? Quit screwing around, you Toffs! Perfect, I done soiled my cushions...