



Freda enjoys harvesting in her own olive groves.

mid-list writers are usually the ones to suffer when there are retail problems. 'They drop through the cracks.' Despite having won book club and supermarket deals, these eventually fell away. And, like many mid-list authors Freda suffered when sagas went out of fashion for a while. But this proved to be grist to the mill for Freda. Her response was to change with the times, something she has often shown herself capable of doing. She changed her style. She changed her publisher. 'I now write time-zone sagas.' The latest, *The Promise*, about family secrets, to be published in September by Allison and Busby, is set partly in San Francisco at the time of the 1906 earthquake and partly in post-war Lakeland.

Another new direction is the biographical historical trilogy about Marguerite de Valois, published by Severn House, *Hostage Queen*, *The Reluctant Queen*, and the forthcoming *The Queen and the Courtesan*.

'During this period I also began to think about how I could revitalise my backlist. I got the rights back and began to investigate e-books. We do have to embrace new technology and mostly I've had to teach myself. I read more websites and nerdy forums than is healthy but the books had to be properly edited and formatted. My first effort appeared in italics. But I resolved that. I learned to use photoshop to make the covers look professional and found it was fun. Then I did promo via blogs, Twitter etc. It was very satisfying.'

Before Christmas 2010 Freda had ten books on Amazon and sales began to take off. Now, 21 are available on Amazon, Sony, Apple – and sales are steadily rising.

Since moving to Spain, Freda now does most of her publicity and promo online. 'There's a danger in doing your own promo that publishers will stand back and let you get on with it. But you get a chance to build your name, not just the book.'

She writes for approximately five hours each morning and edits for another two hours in the early evening aiming for 10,000 words per week for sagas, 8,000 for historicals. For Freda, writing is a great therapy that has helped her through some difficult times. 'Don't believe things are always as wonderful as they appear. But it's how you deal with them that counts. You have to find the positives in life. You have to be excited about the future and whatever you're writing next. People want to read fiction as a means of escape and it's the same for writers. It brings me much pleasure and has brought me many friends, particularly through the RNA, which is such a great resource.'

Attention, Authors!

Owing to other commitments, work related and domestic, do you feel hard pressed to find adequate time to complete all your background fact-finding research?

My aim is to largely focus on the arts aspect of research such as history, military or social history, and historic periods.

The charge for this service will be £25 plus the going rate of VAT yet open to negotiation.

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