



SOFTWOOD
SELF PUBLISHING

Merry Christmas!

A message from our director...

What an exciting year it has been for Softwood! It's been wonderful to get to know so many authors in a variety of genres and, in particular, support the recognition of Cli-Fi as its own genre.

This year also saw our first children's picture books! We have so many projects ahead of us in 2022; I cannot wait to share them with you all. Have a safe and enjoyable Christmas.



Maddy

Left: meet our snowman, made up of self-published books from our library listings page. Add your book for free!

IN WITH THE NEW...

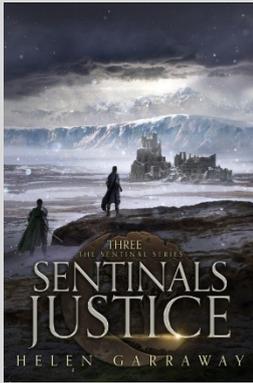
Have you achieved all of your writing goals in 2021? It's been another year of finding our way through the challenges of Covid, but as with every challenge, there are opportunities and experiences that move us forward as human

beings – and as businesses! We were excited to relocate our office to rural Suffolk, a beautiful county, where creativity is rife. We've made new connections and found lots of proud indie authors, but that hasn't stopped us from exploring the rest of the country when touring a number of book festivals. The funding we received from The Prince's Trust in 2020 has enabled us to deliver creative writing and self-publishing workshops in person (and on Zoom), and we've made some wonderful connections (see report on page 2).

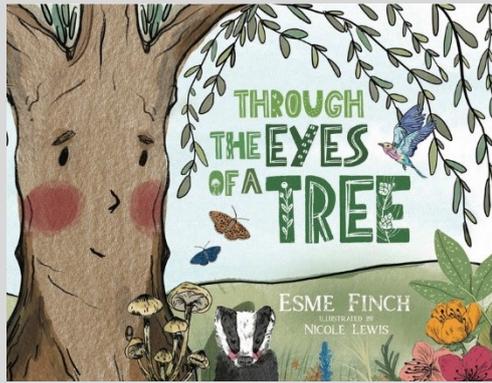
As ever, our clients have been a real delight to work with as we help them achieve their self-publishing goals. We've been impressed by not only their writing talent but by their creativity, tenacity, and willingness to learn and develop their skills. We've seen a huge range of books come through the office, and our bookshelves continue to groan under the weight of our ever-expanding portfolio. If we've had the pleasure of working with you this year, thank you, and if you're hoping to work with us next year, we hope you'll enjoy a rewarding experience as you get to know us.



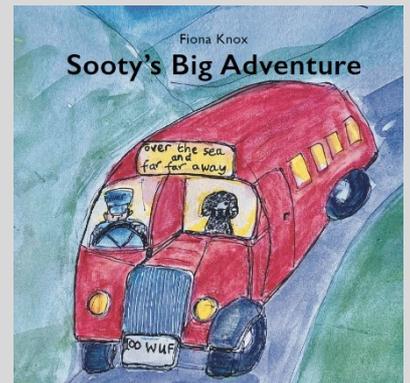
Our 2021 project highlights...



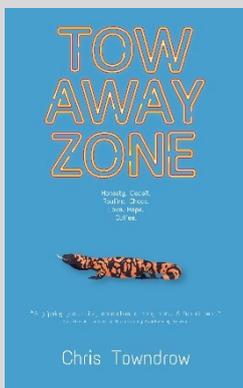
Sentinals Justice
Helen Garraway
Fantasy



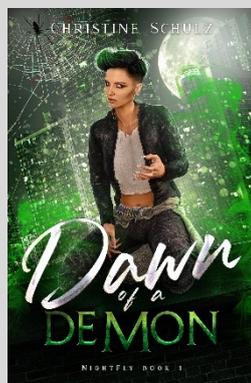
Through the Eyes of a Tree
Esme Finch
Children's Cli-Fi



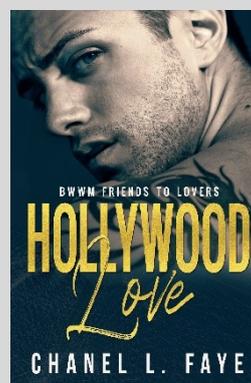
Sooty's Big Adventure
Fiona Knox
Children's Picture Book



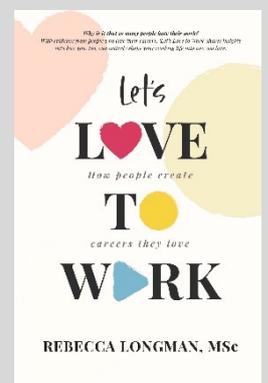
Tow Away Zone
Chris Towndrow
Adventure



Dawn of a Demon
Christine Schulz
Fantasy



Hollywood Love
Chanel L. Faye
Romance



Let's Love to Work
Rebecca Longan
Self-Help

Further details on where to purchase these can be found on Softwood's library page, where we support the work of over 300 indie authors.

Book festivals...

This year saw the long-awaited start of Softwood's creative writing and self-publishing workshops (delayed by pandemic from 2020). Sadly, some festivals were still not able to go ahead, but it was a happy team from Softwood in October, who journeyed the six hours from our HQ down to Appledore in Devon to take part in their fantastic live event. Earlier in the year, we delivered an online self-publishing workshop to a global audience of writers via Zoom, as part of the Essex Book Festival.

We're really looking forward to creating new partnerships with book festivals across the UK in 2022, so if your local literary event is looking to help educate and empower independent authors, please pass on our details!



**ESSEX
BOOK
FESTIVAL**

Social media update...

How has your social media performed in 2021?

We've developed a record number of book marketing strategies for client's social media platforms this year and taken great care to research each one individually to ensure that, whatever the genre, their audience is told a story that will eventually lead them to the all-important sales page!

What do you need to be aware of in 2022?

Instagram

Video content continues to grow in popularity and importance, to the extent that Instagram is now using their algorithms to promote video content over the still images that have been its main draw.

- Use reels and the stories function on Instagram to help reach a wider audience
- Make use of the option to link a web URL in your stories

Twitter

With so many concerns over Facebook's ethical conduct this year, we've noticed more authors switching to Twitter instead.

- Remember, with Twitter, you need to engage with other accounts in order to attract engagement to your own posts.
- Post regularly and don't fill your profile with just your own tweets. Retweet others, reply to people, give fellow writers a shoutout too!
- Beware the legendary #WritersLifts. Yes, one post can attract many new followers and thousands of impressions, but are they really being posted by an author? Check who you're replying to!

Facebook

Groups offering support, advice, and services are still a good place to engage with the writing community.

- Beware, unless your author page has many followers, you will need to pay to have your posts promoted in order to attract the kind of impressions you can obtain for free on Twitter!

LinkedIn

A platform growing in popularity with authors, as it promotes a professional image.

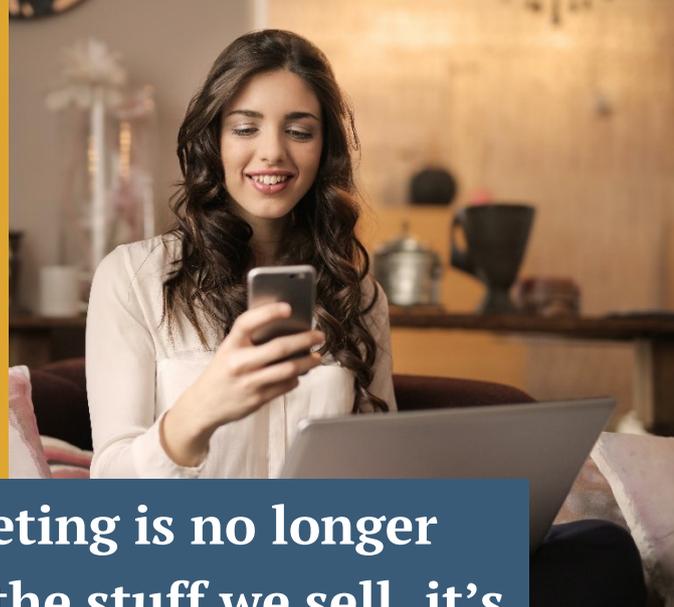
- A good place to find well-written articles regarding current publishing trends. Don't forget to follow Softwood's page!

Pinterest

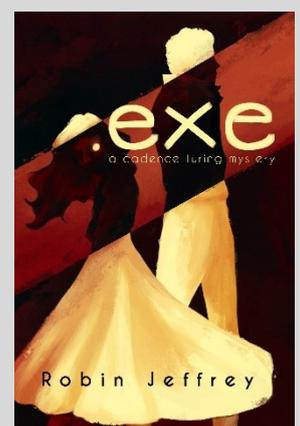
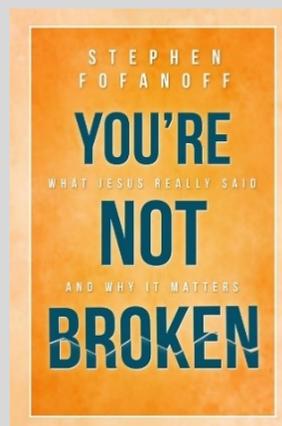
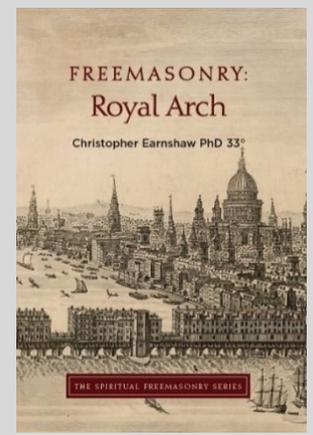
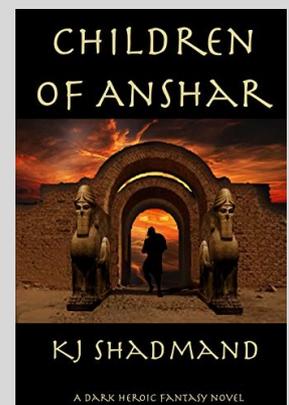
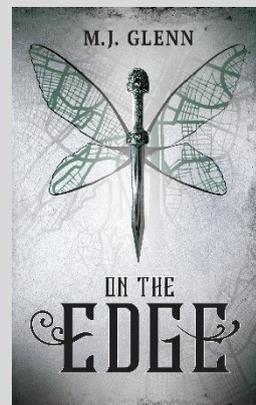
- A good place to create a mood board for your writing, either to help inspire you or to show your audience the world of your book.

TikTok

- Growing in popularity but not for the camera shy! Interact with #BookTok to reveal your book cover; post an unboxing video; act out your plot; engage with book bloggers; read an extract; go viral!



“Marketing is no longer about the stuff we sell, it’s about the stories we tell.”



Just a few of the books we've helped promote this year!

Spotlight on Indie Bookshops...

DIAL LANE BOOKS

As an author, it pays to get acquainted with your local independent bookshop – if you're lucky enough to have one close to you. We were delighted to find the excellent Dial Lane Books upon our arrival in Suffolk.

Run with enthusiasm and energy by the owner, Andrew, Dial Lane Books supports independent authors and has an impressive selection of authors from not only our county but across the UK. If you ever find yourself in Ipswich, drop in and say hi, or find them online at www.diallanebooks.co.uk / [@dial_lane_books](https://twitter.com/dial_lane_books)



As ever, our thanks to everyone in the team for everything they've done to ensure our clients have the best experience when working with Softwood.

Augustine - editing
Harvey – social media
Susi - design
Carl - design
Claire – design
Lizzie - intern
Nathan - marketing
Maddy – editing

and our associates at
TJ Books & Polstead Press

What are people saying on Google about Softwood in 2021?

5.0 ★★★★★

Softwood have proved to be exceptionally receptive and responsive towards the novice, and their efficient, courteous professionalism has led my project to a highly satisfying conclusion.
(Martin Gosling)

You've been such a vital piece of my publishing puzzle! From advice on the publishing process to fabulous editing critiques and suggestions, from embellishing my work to grammar correction perfection! I've loved working with Maddy and her team. Highly recommend them. (Rebecca Longman)

As a debut author, working with Softwood Self-Publishing was such a great experience. Maddy as an editor was patient and helped shape my manuscript so that the story shone. Nathan was excellent with the marketing of my new book. I will definitely work with them again and recommend them to anyone thinking of self-publishing. (Lindiwe Letsholo)

Your self-publishing checklist for 2022

(UK authors)

	Write draft 1!
	Self-edit before requesting a quote for editing
	Think about distribution – how are you going to publish? Print on demand or print a stock? Ebook?
	Purchase an ISBN. Remember, a free ISBN from Amazon restricts you to selling that edition only through them.
	Book your cover and interior designers
	Request a quote for printing your stock of books
	Upload to Amazon if using their distribution
	Register with Nielsen Title Editor (UK) and Gardners distributors if you have a stock to sell
	Establish/build your online author presence through a social media marketing strategy
	Reveal your cover design as part of marketing strategy leading up to your book launch
	Book launch! Talk to indie bookshops if you have a stock
	Send a copy of your book to the British Library.
	Seek book tours/interviews/free listings through your social media



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