

Interview with James Young, Narrator of *Longbow*

James, *Longbow* is not the first book you've narrated, can you tell us about some of the others?

I discovered that there were a large number of books that authors had posted on ACX (the Amazon clearing house) hoping to lure a narrator! All of them tend to pay new narrators like myself a commission only, so the impetus is to seek out a genre that will sell at least a few copies.... I've tried finance, marketing, self-help, romantic novels and of course historical novels and am still no nearer to finding the secret.

Well, perhaps we'll find the key with *Longbow*! But how did you get into the business of doing voice work in the first place? When and how did you get the idea that this might be a new career for you?

Well, if I ever had the idea it would be a new career I'm afraid that's dwindling! It's more of a hobby I think.... I could earn more money doing one 4-hour shift per week in a gas station. But I do enjoy it immensely. To answer the question, I joined a book club about a year ago and I planned to listen to the monthly book in my car commuting to and from work. I found myself comparing the styles of the narrators and thinking about their work and the kinds of factors they'd have to consider. Within about 6 months I was auditioning to do narration myself.

I see that your grandfather was a British officer in WWI and Companion, Distinguished Service Order (D.S.O.). My grandfather was a doughboy sergeant wounded in France in the Great War. Our countries truly do have a special relationship. So, how has it been, so far, collaborating with an American on this project?

Oh, it's just great collaborating with an American. I find Americans more direct and optimistic than my own countrymen and I think that if you're taking part in any venture it's counter-productive to spend too much time reminding oneself about pitfalls and doubts and better to just believe in the appeal of your own fervour. The fervour of the Americans joining WW1 was certainly a fillip to our tiring, and increasingly mutinous, troops and I suspect your grandfather was wounded *throwing* himself at the enemy in a way the British and French had long since abandoned, and that he and his comrades brought an end to the war. My grandfather was a General in the end and was killed just a few weeks into the war....



I think you've done a wonderful job capturing the personalities of my characters. Do you have a favorite? Which voice was the most challenging?

I particularly like Roger de Laval and Millie...they have a great enthusiasm and a similar way of expressing themselves and luckily for me the voice seemed to match that.

I note that you were once lead singer of the Punk Rock band, The Scabs. Tell us more! I listened to a clip and thought you guys could have had a future! Do you still sing and if so when and where (beyond the shower)?

Yes, I sing...it was because of my previous work recording little songs that I was able to have a go at recording and editing an audiobook. People now believe that laughing is extremely good for you and I happen to think that singing is too. I currently sing in local pubs with my long- time collaborator, Barry. However, it's never been more than a hobby. That punk single has recently picked up a surge of interest from a new young generation of record buyers who are fascinated with these small "homemade" bands of the 1970s...we were so spontaneous and outside of anything corporate. If it wasn't for these new fans keeping it all going I think that whole episode would have been long forgotten.



But check out this clip—it's a classic!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-AQQIH7Us8w>

Are there any particular audiobook narrators that are your favorites?

Robert Glenister who does the Robert Galbraith (JK Rowling) detective novels with the main character Cormoran Strike. He is of course a decent actor anyway but I am always desperately lost in one of his narrations. I also like the novelist Cormac McCarthy's renditions of his own work

What do you like to read for fun? Who are your favorite authors?

Historical novels Just like yours! It's eerie to cast yourself back in time. I also love visiting castles and medieval battle reconstructions.