

Final Word: Noël Sweeney

North Somerset resident, barrister and author Noël Sweeney has combined his wealth of knowledge on human and animal rights with his love of poetry to produce his latest book, *Jungle Judge Justice*, which has just been released. We were intrigued to find out more...

Please tell us about your career as a barrister?

As a barrister I specialise in criminal law, human rights and animal law. Advocacy is the core of my practice in advising and appearing in court. My practice involves complex and serious cases ranging from animal abuse to murder and all human conduct in between. In every case the aim of advocacy remains the same, namely to reach and persuade the respective judge and jury.

What triggered your interest in Human Rights?

I became interested in Human Rights because of its impact on English Law. It is relevant to all of us in relation to discrimination, equality, liberty and our right to a fair trial. As the Convention affects the 'right to life' it chimes with my long-term interest in Animal Law. Animals deserve



BELOW:
Striking a pose - Noël Sweeney with the black Labrador

RIGHT:
Jungle Judge Justice is available now

respect and dignity because they are, as Darwin discovered 150 years ago, 'The difference in mind between man and the higher animals, great as it is, certainly is one of degree and not of kind.' Abraham Lincoln, a practising attorney and a President, was born the same year as Darwin in 1809. Given the kinship and sentience of animals, I was influenced by Lincoln's dicta: 'I am in favour of animal rights as well as human rights. That is the way of a whole human being.'

When did you start writing poetry?

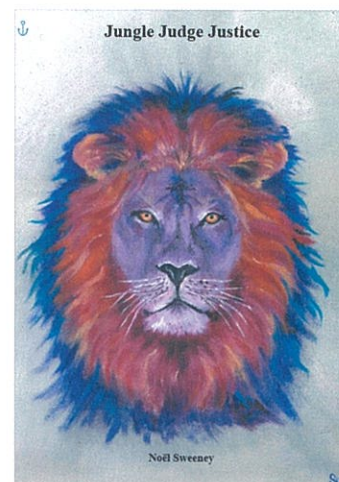
My interest in poetry began decades ago with the majestic work of William Blake, a visionary who was centuries ahead of his time. His philosophical prescient poetry is concerned with justice, slavery and animal rights. Blake identified the unpalatable truth that one woman's lunch is another animal's life.

How did you come up with the idea for your book, *Jungle Judge Justice*?

I wove those vital strands together in 'An Animals' Charter' which advocated legal rights for animals. The conclusion leads to their need for us to extend the concept of a 'legal personality' to animals which relates to 'rights' rather than mere 'welfare'. The principles within 'An Animals' Charter' led logically to my animal rights poetry in 'Blue-bird sings the Blues' and 'Jungle Judge Justice'. The theme of each analyses the connection between racism and sexism and speciesism.

What is the book about?

'Jungle Judge Justice' links that theme with climate change, ecology and our environment in relation to human and animal rights. It examines all aspects of rights from slavery to rebellion,



from suffragettes to vivisection.

Will there be more books?

I am currently preparing an Anthology of those three books which is an attempt to promote justice for those forever hamstrung by being born without a human tongue.

Do you have a funny animal-related tale to tell?

While I was having my photo taken to promote my book, 'Dogs of Law', a black Labrador suddenly appeared. I had never seen him before. I was slightly nervous as he wandered around me. Then he struck a settled pose right in front of me. He waited for the photographer's camera to click. Once the photo was taken, he sauntered off. I never saw him again. The result proved he meant no offence as plainly the pooch is far more photogenic than the author.

Jungle Judge Justice by Noël Sweeney can be bought on Kobo as an e-book for £12.99, and on Amazon as an e-book for £12.99 and paperback for £20. A hardback edition is available for £23 via: www.animalsadvocate.co.uk