

Ian Fleming



The ex-banker, journalist, military man and secret agent, definitely preferred his Martinis shaken, not stirred. A staunch believer in 'luxury living', he was his own prototype for 007.

QUICK FACTS

NAME

Ian Fleming

OCCUPATION

Author

BIRTH DATE

May 28, 1908

DEATH DATE

August 12, 1964

EDUCATION

Royal Military Academy, Eton
College, University of Geneva,
Munich University

PLACE OF BIRTH

London, England

PLACE OF DEATH

Canterbury, Kent, England

AKA

Ian Fleming

FULL NAME

Ian Lancaster Fleming

Ian Fleming, creator of James Bond, was much like his fictional character. Fleming was a spy, a notorious womaniser and he liked his martinis shaken, not stirred. Part of the British aristocracy, he was a journalist, a banker and a military man, who finally wrote his first novel at age 43.

Over the next 11 years, he wrote 13 Bond novels and the children's book 'Chitty Chitty Bang Bang'. Once translated to the silver screen, James Bond launched the world's longest running series of movies.

Fleming was born in Mayfair, London, to Valentine Fleming, an MP, and his wife Evelyn Ste Croix Fleming. Ian was the younger brother of travel writer Peter Fleming and the older brother of Michael and Richard Fleming. He also had an illegitimate half-sister, the cellist Amaryllis Fleming.

He was educated at Eton before going on to the Royal Military Academy at Sandhurst. After an early departure from the prestigious officer training school, he opted to study languages at a private school in Austria.

Following an unsuccessful application to join the Foreign Office, Fleming worked as a sub-editor and journalist for the Reuters news agency, and then as a stockbroker in the City of London.

On the eve of World War II, Fleming was recruited into naval intelligence. Owing in part to his facility with languages, he was a personal assistant to

Admiral John H. Godfrey, who served as the model for James Bond's commanding officer, "M".

Fleming was put in charge of a special commando unit (from behind his desk in Whitehall) and was involved in the plot to wash up a dead body on occupied Europe containing false intelligence about Allied landings.

During the last year of the war, Fleming visited Jamaica on military business and decided that he would work to make this tropical paradise his home. He set about making this goal happen and did it with style. He designed and built a home in Jamaica he called Goldeneye.

He left naval intelligence after the war, having attained the rank of Commander, and kept up his rank with the Royal Naval Voluntary Reserve for some years, having to undergo two weeks training a year. There is little evidence that Fleming carried out any of the exploits that he later attributed to James Bond - however, what is

clear is that Bond would have been unlikely to come about had Fleming not spent the time he did in the intelligence services.

Indeed, Fleming's intelligence work provided the background for his spy novels. In 1953, he published his first novel, 'Casino Royale'. In it, he introduced secret agent James Bond, also famously known by his code number, 007 - which gave him a "licence to kill". It is believed that, in this initial story, he based the female character "Vesper Lynd" on real life SOE agent, Christine Granville.

Besides the 12 novels and nine short stories he wrote featuring James Bond, Fleming is also known for the children's story, 'Chitty Chitty Bang Bang'.

In 1961, he sold the film rights to his already published as well as future James Bond novels and short stories to Harry Saltzman, who, with Albert R. "Cubby" Broccoli, co-produced the film version of 'Dr. No' (1962). For the cast, Fleming suggested friend and neighbour Noël Coward as the villain Dr. Julius No, and David Niven or, later, Roger Moore as James Bond. Both were rejected in favour of Sean Connery, who was both Broccoli and Saltzman's choice.

'Dr. No' proved to be an instant sensation and sparked a spy craze through the rest of the 1960s. It was followed by 'From Russia with Love' (1963), the second and last James Bond movie Ian Fleming saw.

Fleming died of a heart attack in Kent in August, 1964. He was only 56. His widow, Ann Geraldine Mary Fleming (1913-1981), and son Caspar Robert Fleming (1952–1975), are buried next to him.

Comprehension exercise

After you have read the text, answer the following comprehension questions on a sheet of lined paper:

1. How many novels did Ian Fleming write?
2. How old was Ian Fleming when he wrote his first novel?
3. By whom was Ian Fleming's family composed?
4. What did he decide to study?
5. Which were some of his occupations?
6. Who served as a model for the character of "M" on Ian Fleming's books?
7. Which country did he visit during the last year of war and decide to stay in?
8. What was the name of the house he built in?
9. When did he publish his first novel?
10. Who did he sell the film rights to?
11. Which was the last film that Ian Fleming saw while being alive?
12. When and how did Ian Fleming die?

Sources:

Lifetime TV

<http://www.lifetimetv.co.uk/biography/biography-ian-fleming>

Biography.com