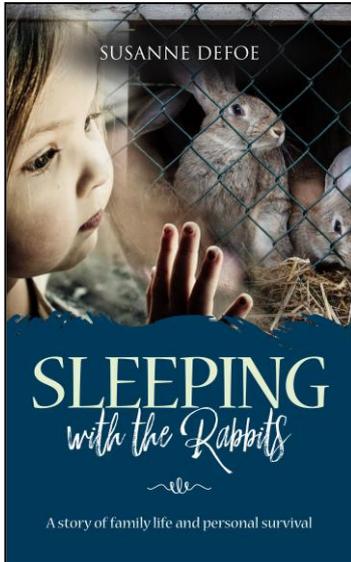


## MEREO NEW BOOK: PRESS RELEASE

A moving, true-life story of an escape from domestic abuse

PUBLICATION DATE: 31 JULY 2017

*"He would drink in secret and think that nobody would ever know, even if he was completely out of it... Now I realise that Mum could never have confronted him as that would have been real trouble for all of us"*



# SLEEPING WITH THE RABBITS

A STORY OF FAMILY LIFE AND PERSONAL SURVIVAL

by SUSANNE DEFOE

*"One of my first memories was of climbing into the rabbit hutch and snuggling down into the straw to sleep ... I just stayed there until they found me. I was only two-and-a-half"*



ISBN: 978 1 86151 803 3 Paperback 221 pages RRP: £12.99 July 2017  
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(Also available as an ebook)

Susan Defoe's harrowing memoir describes the violence and bullying she suffered as a child and the abusive relationships of her adult life. It is an account of alcohol abuse, a family suicide, teenage pregnancy and of ordinary people whose lives are wrecked by ignorance and selfishness.

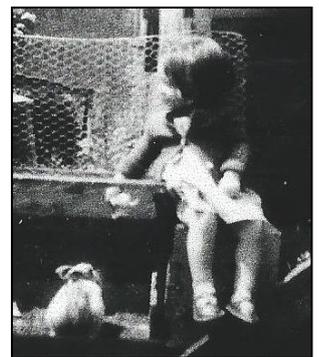
However, this book also contains a message of hope as this is the story of one woman's courageous struggle to survive and escape from domestic abuse

*"Things seemed to get worse at home, if that was possible. No laughing, no talking out loud, no playing or having fun of any kind allowed ... you couldn't even look at him without fear of his hand being raised"*

Susanne Defoe was born in the early 1950s. She suffered parental violence and bullying at school on a daily basis throughout her childhood, finding comfort only with her pet rabbits. Desperate to escape from her cruel father and her ignorant mother, she found herself pregnant at fifteen by a boy who turned out to be as much of a waster as her father and spent all his wages in the pub. But what choices – if any – did she have as a pregnant teenage girl in the mid-1960s?

This is the story of how Susanne struggled to escape from a life of abuse, cruelty and ignorance to try to gain some self-respect and to build a decent life for herself and her daughters.

*The author as a child with her pet rabbits >*



*"I couldn't work there anymore as the smell was making me feel sick ... What I didn't know was that I was pregnant ... Fifteen and three months pregnant, but I still didn't know what was wrong with me."*

**Author, Susanne Defoe** was born, raised and educated in High Wycombe, Buckinghamshire; she now lives in Tring, Hertfordshire.

**Media opportunities:** Extracts/serialisation. A few, low-resolution photos from the 1950s/60s are available on request. The author is available for interviews.



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