

Inca Author Information Page

C.R.MAY

Currently living in: Framlingham, Suffolk.

Main works:

Sword of Woden Trilogy:

1. Sorrow Hill
2. Wræcca
3. Monsters

Novella: (Sword of Woden 4)

Dayraven

Brennus, Conqueror of Rome:

1. Terror Gallicus
2. Nemesis

King's Bane:

1. Fire & Steel

I started writing because: I felt that I had to. My main interest lies in the barbarian north during the so-called dark ages and tired of always reading history, fiction and non-fiction, written from the point of view of the Mediterranean civilisations I wanted to do my own small part to redress the balance.

My main writing interests are: My main interest lies in Historical Fiction. My earlier works included a fair bit of the old gods and supernatural elements, the Sword of Woden Beowulf series for obvious reasons. I still like to weave in a god or two when I can, it depends on the storyline.

My sources of research and information are: The books which I have read and collected over many years are my main source of information, although the internet is now a great tool for more immediate, perhaps less specialised answers. I often stop mid-sentence and dip into Safari for the name of, for example marshland plants or to use the Anglo-Saxon/modern English translator for an unfamiliar word. A lot more comes from the experiences and memories which I have accumulated during my lifetime. I am the type who stops and looks in wonder at interesting cloud formations or a choppy seascape. Also, I have visited many places and 'soaked up' the atmosphere there: Berlin, the Little Big Horn, Iceland and experienced life as crew on a tall ship, sweating in sails and sleeping in a hammock. It all goes in the books.

My inspiration comes from: A lifelong love of northern European history. I like to show that my/our ancestors were essentially the same as we are today, but without access to modern technology. For so long the pre-literate civilisations of Europe, Celtic and Germanic, have been portrayed as little more than grubby savages, despite the evidence which has come down to this day in the form of metalwork and great monuments such as Stonehenge. I want to give these people the voice which they deserve.

My stories are planned like this: I am a real 'pantster' in my writing, a seat-of-my-pants word jockey. Because the books are set during a definite historical period I have a framework to work within, but the story itself evolves as I write. The few times that I have attempted to plan a novel I have started off and, before I know it, the story has shot off on a tangent as my imagination leads me in an entirely different direction.

I have written a series of books based on: The pre Christian lands and people of northern Europe, which were in most ways very far from the 'barbarian' description they are so often given.

My future plans are to: I am halfway through the follow-up to Fire & Steel at the moment, after which I have an idea that I will begin a series about a Viking jarl set in and around the Northern Isles, Orkney and Shetland. As with most writers I have more ideas for a great series' than time to write them. Other eras which I would like to explore at some time include the battle for Gaul against Julius Caesar, but from the Gaulish side, and a medieval English Bowman, a sort of proto-socialist who falls in with a gang that goes around bumping off their betters during the time of the battle of Crecy, the plague and the Peasants' Revolt.

My own favourite character is: Catumanda, the female druid from my Brennus series. She is a very likeable young lady who just happens to be able to turn herself into a killing machine at the drop of a (tall, white) hat.

I sometimes find myself thinking like: Thrush Hemming, in Fire & Steel. He is a senior warrior in the war band, second only to Eorle Eofer himself in seniority and he is a no-nonsense kind of guy. Whatever the situation, however unjust it may seem he just accepts it and does his best, which is, after all, all that you can do.

My advice to new writers would be: Never give up. Write because you want to and don't expect to interest agents or publishers; if it happens, fine. In the big publishing houses, like most walks in life, it's more important whom you know, not what you know. There is a good reason why most of the writers at Harpers etc. went to the same schools and have a background in the media. As Thrush Hemming would say, 'tough shit'. Don't try to be the next (your hero). Learn your trade and find your own voice.

Writing has its ups and downs: The best part of writing is the kick you get that people read and enjoy the product of your imagination. The worst, probably, is the measly amount that many people are willing to pay to read that product. Whole generations seem to have grown up with the idea that entertainment, especially anything downloadable, should be free, be that music, literature or any other media. The same person who would happily pay £3 for a coffee on the way into work will deem a book too expensive at half that price, despite the fact that it will offer them on average 11-12 hours of escapism from the crappy job which they hate.

When I'm not writing: I am a single parent with four children at home including two of school age so my life is pretty busy. We all gave up on TV years ago so my evenings are spent either listening to music, beer in hand, or reading, er...beer in hand.

For copy editing and proofreading: In the early days finances forced me to do the lot and I managed to get myself pretty proficient. I have always prided myself on good presentation so I really worked at it to produce the very best that I could. My eldest son is a Classics graduate and he gives

the manuscript a final read through. I am lucky he is a slow and meticulous reader, so not much gets past. Several reviews have mentioned the high standard of editing and presentation in my books so we must be doing something well between us!

I accept criticism from: Anyone, but again I am fortunate that the vast majority of my reviews are very positive. I am past the stage where my confidence can be shaken by a nasty review, I shrug and move on, but I do think on what they have said and see if it can help me to improve.

My experiences with self-publishing:

Quite honestly, without the ability to self-publish I would have never written a single book, it's as simple as that. Whatever you think about the power/tax dodging issues surrounding Amazon and other multinationals, both the KDP e-book and their Createspace paperback divisions are easy, slick and free to use. They even offer free ISBN, so anyone with access to a word processor can have a book for sale at no cost whatsoever. Also, once they are up, your manuscripts can be easily updated at any time. How authors coped with the trauma of finding a typo or other error in their work when they already had half a dozen boxes of paperbacks in the garage I will never know. With print on demand this is never an issue.

Unfortunately this ease of use and the sheer size of the Amazon operation has led to various scams and other abuses over the past few years, but like everything in these interconnected days, it's just a reality of the age that you have to live with.

I promote my books via: Like many Britons I am absolutely rotten at self-promotion, it's just not in us. Because I have school age children I try to do my actual writing during the school day, and produce one book per term; three novels per year. That gives me the holidays to gather my thoughts and research materials for my next book and put a bit more effort into updating the website etc. I do find the whole social media book promo thing a bit desperate in all honesty: thousands of people posting up reviews and buy links that nobody is really interested in. I try to produce the best novels that I can so that when a new reader discovers one of my books they will want to read my other work and hopefully tell others.

My favourite mainstream authors are:

In Historical fiction, Harry Sidebottom gets my vote. Effortless prose combined with a deep knowledge of his subject (he is an Oxford Don after all)! Although the series is only one book in at the moment, Justin Hill's Shieldwall really caught my imagination; it's a book which I can read again and again.

I am currently reading: I am midway through Half a War, the final part of Joe Abercrombie's fantasy trilogy.

I prefer to read books in: Probably paperback, although I am beginning to edge towards the dark side (e-book). Anyone who lives in a recently built house, certainly in the UK, will know just how 'space efficient' they are. There is just no room to store shelf-loads of lovely hardbacks which, for a growing number of people, will soon go the way of extensive DVD and CD collections. Downloads will be king. Paperbacks I can read anywhere and not worry too much about the need to cull them occasionally. E-books are great and they are the future whether people like it or not, but for now I prefer to actually have something physical to show for my hard-earned.

A bit about my other interests: An odd thing and a mundane thing...I always pass the dutchie from the right hand side and I look so like my father that it is scary.

My most unattainable ambition is: I can't really say, she might stumble upon this page.

Author Links

Website:

<http://cliffordmay.com>

Amazon Author page:

http://www.amazon.co.uk/C.-R.-May/e/B00DXJ2R8l/ref=ntt_dp_epwbk_0

Twitter:

<https://twitter.com/cliffordrmay>

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